

A FRANCISCAN VIEW OF THE
SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

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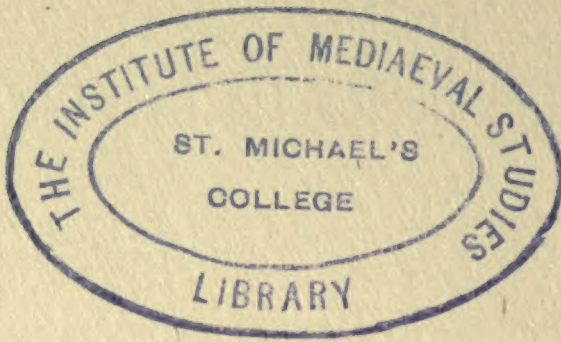
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OF THE
SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

BEING
THREE TREATISES FROM THE WRITINGS OF
SAINT BONAVENTURE

DONE INTO ENGLISH
BY
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ¹

ST. BONAVENTURE was born at Bagnorea, near Viterbo, in 1221. Seventeen years later he entered the Order of Friars Minor, and in 1242, about three years after his Profession, was sent to complete his studies at Paris. Here he was the pupil of the famous English Franciscan Alexander of Hales, and became the intimate friend of the saintly Dominican Thomas Aquinas. The two received together the degree of Doctor in October 1257.

In the February of the same year, Bonaventure, though only thirty-six years old, had been elected Minister-General of his Order, a position he held for seventeen years. At the General Chapter at Lyons in May 1274 he was succeeded in that office by Jerome of Ascoli, and, in the following July, whilst assisting at the deliberations of the Council of Lyons, he died. He was canonized by Pope Sixtus IV in 1482 and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Sixtus V in 1587.

¹ For an admirable review of St. Bonaventure's life and writings, the reader may be referred to the article "Bonaventure," by Fr. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., in vol. ii of *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

FRATRIBUS
PIGNUS SPEI
AMORISQUE

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¹ These references are to St. Bonaventure's *Determinationes Quæstionum circa Regulam FF. Minorum* ; a series of *Questions* (Q) and Answers, in two Parts (P. i : P. ii). This translation is taken throughout from the edition of St. Bonaventure's works published by the Franciscans at Quaracchi, 1882-1902.—*Tr.*

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A FRANCISCAN VIEW OF THE SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

INTRODUCTION

WHY ST. FRANCIS FOUNDED HIS ORDER

*Question.*¹—When so many holy religious orders with approved rules were already in existence, why did St. Francis found another order, as though the work of his saintly predecessors was not enough?

Answer.—I answer you thus: The holy Father Francis, filled with the Spirit of God and all aflame with zeal of love both towards God and his neighbour, was consumed with a threefold desire. He wished, without let or hindrance, in all perfection of virtue to be an imitator of Christ. Then he wished also wholly to cling to God in the sweetness of

¹ The reader should bear in mind that the imaginary questioner, with whom St. Bonaventure was dealing, was a fault-finding, querulous and generally dissatisfied sort of person—such as are not unknown even in our own day.—*Tr.*

assiduous contemplation ; and lastly he longed for souls, that he might win them to God, and thus save those for whom Christ willed to be crucified and die. But since it did not suffice him to labour like this in his own person alone, he wished to found an Order wherein many might co-operate with him, and that, not merely in his own day but also in days to come, men who should stand out as imitators of his own sanctity, and gain many another to God.

Now the orders he saw in the Church aimed at one or other of these three ends. There were the monks living in community, following the footsteps of Christ and imitating His virtues. There were the hermit monks giving themselves up continuously to divine contemplation, and then there were the secular clergy, the parish priests, who, having care of souls, are bound, in virtue of their office, to work with all vigilance for the salvation of souls. Nowhere, however, did he find an order embracing simultaneously these three ends, and consequently, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, he wrote a new Rule and founded a new Order, the members of which, by professing the evangelical counsels, obedience that is, and chastity and poverty, were

to walk in the footsteps of Christ, by preaching and hearing confessions were to labour usefully for the salvation of souls, and in the highest poverty and consequent liberty of spirit were to lay hold of the purest divine contemplation. For although exterior work may from time to time interrupt the quiet of contemplation, still liberty of soul, that complete freedom from the distractions borne of solicitude about temporal concerns, offers a great opportunity, to such as profit by it, of devoting themselves to spiritual things in prayer and spiritual reading, meditation and contemplation. The tumult of temporal cares hinders the purity of devotion far more than a laudable exterior activity, for importunate worries, especially in one leading a sedentary life, beget an unquiet mind, whereas the faithful fulfilment of good work tranquillizes the mind, enriches it and raises it heavenwards. He who has laboured in the preparation of the feast is the one who, sitting quietly down, enjoys it the most. Thus Our Lord was busy by day, preaching to the people and healing the sick, but by night on the mountain-side, He gave Himself to prayer : *And in the daytime he was teaching in the temple ; but at night going out he abode in the mount that is called Olivet*

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(Luke xxi. 37). *In the daytime the Lord hath commanded his mercy ; and a canticle to him in the night* (Psalm 41 : 9). St. Francis did not mean the care of souls to be assigned to his Brethren as a duty necessarily pertaining to their state, but as a free work of charity to be by them undertaken spontaneously : the saving of souls to be accounted to them as merit, but their loss as no matter of reproach ; sharing in gain, secure from harm ; drawing others from the wreck and the burning, themselves firm ever and secure, unendangered by the falling of those who perish in sin.

WHY THE BRETHREN LIVE IN LARGE CONVENTS

Question.—If big numbers so increase your wants, why do you build such large convents, instead of living in twos or threes, or at most six or eight in poor little houses, dwelling quietly therein in truer poverty and humility ? It is precisely on large numbers that pompous people seem to pride themselves.

Answer.—I answer, for these two reasons do we prefer large to really small convents. Firstly, because they facilitate regular observance. Thus, the various duties can be

apportioned out in more orderly fashion and more expeditiously fulfilled ; the religious are restrained from a neglect or violation of rule which must be at once apparent to many ; good example and experience can make themselves felt, and, as a result of all this, there prevails a truer interior spirit of prayer and greater regularity, the Divine Office is chanted with more becoming dignity and more attentive accuracy and care, and the young religious are more solidly trained. Secondly, because they facilitate good work for souls. Thus, men will be always available for hearing confessions and preaching ; the study of Theology can be better provided for, and the suitable be thus equipped for the instruction of others, whereas in small houses, whilst some are away preaching, others on " quest " in the neighbourhood, others possibly weak and infirm, others occupied in domestic work, neither religious observance nor study nor the liturgy can be maintained as they should be.

THE VALUE OF MONASTIC STRUCTURE

. . . Although to the perfect every place is a suitable place for the exercise of interior prayer, yet for the imperfect and those still

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requiring instruction in the spiritual life, there is need of a convent constructed on monastic lines so that all may know where to keep silent and where to speak, where the oratory is and where the workshop, where they may read and write, where to sleep, where to eat, where the Infirmary is and where the guest-house for such as come wearied after a journey, and so on for all those other offices required for a religious community, without which everybody carries on his work anywhere and everywhere with equal indifference, and, as a result, there is no observance amongst the Brethren, no quiet, no interior spirit of prayer and no order. All this causes great detriment to the religious life, scandal to outsiders and even loss of souls, for the young cannot learn to advance and the old cease to edify. . . .

THE MARKS OF A FLOURISHING ORDER

Question.—Since religious appear to be self-satisfied and even to prefer themselves to members of other orders, what are the chief marks whereby a flourishing order may be recognized, and in the possession of which one order may be rightly regarded as better than another ?

Answer.—I answer : One order often excels another in some special feature, e.g. in manual work, or in silence or fasting and such like, but it is not in such points as these, but rather in what follows, that the test of real value lies. Thus it is a good sign if the members of an order as a whole exercise themselves fervently and often in the practice of every virtue and especially of charity and humility and the interior spirit of prayer. Then, if they detest all vice and scandal and are much on their guard against them, and if they cut away and wholly eliminate occasions of sin, and everywhere love and preserve cleanliness. Thirdly, if the good amongst them are loved and encouraged, and, others being set aside, are alone chosen for the ruling of souls and for the chief government of the order : *He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little* (Ecclus. xix. 1). Fourthly, if they draw away from too great familiarity with seculars, and fly honours, and do not scheme after money, and are ashamed to be *conformed to this world* (Rom. xii. 2), in manners or acts or appearance of any kind. Fifthly, if they suffer in silence loss and insult and contempt, and do not seek querulously to vindicate themselves, but wait on the all-seeing God—

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Who, when He wishes can defend His own, and, whilst He sees it to be expedient for them, permits them to be afflicted in view of a greater reward—and bear it patiently till it may please God to ordain otherwise.

The more completely religious possess these qualities, the better they are, and the less they have of them the less perfect they are, and those who have none of them are nothing indeed ; but the individual who has them is good in himself even though it happen at times that his community have them not.

THE CAUSES OF DECLINE

Question.—We see all religious orders failing in the religious life, although materially and as far as religious functions go, they may seem to be very flourishing. I wish to know the chief causes of this falling away, for either you ought not to begin what you cannot accomplish, or, having once begun, you should do your best to persevere, otherwise you will rightly be considered prevaricators of your vows.

Answer.—I answer : Everything which does not draw its *existence* from itself, tends to fall back into *non-existence* unless maintained by

him to whom it owes *existence*. So it is with every order and with every man. Hence not merely religious orders, but bishops, ecclesiastics, laymen, in fact every group of society has actually, and looked at corporately as a class, very much deteriorated from those early days when all Christians were perfect with a sanctity now rarely seen. *And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul* (Acts iv. 32). Although then, as a body, all of old were good and holy, however, numerically there are far more saints now in the Church of God than there were then, but because there are more evil people too, therefore is it that, compared with these latter, the holy seem in numbers to be insignificant. Then again, true sanctity does not lie in exterior activity, but in the interior spirit, of which the operations are not outwardly visible, except in so far as they may be in part detected by certain outward works. Then the saints do not seek to be seen of men to be praised by them, but rather hide such special favours as they may have received; and thus saints in the Church and in religious orders appear to be few.

Now among the causes of decline in religious communities some are general. Of these one lies in the number of those who enter, because

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a crowd is less susceptible of moulding than a few. A big ship is harder to steer than a small one, and where you have many heads, you have many brains, and it is not easy to get them all to think alike. A second cause arises where those who held an order together in its pristine vigour pass away or get feeble, and cannot, as they might have done previously, give to those just arriving an example of austerity ; and thus the novices, who were not witnesses of their former works, imitate them as they have now become, and become easy-going themselves, under guise of discretion, pampering their bodies lest they weaken them as their elders did. And because they do not recognize the interior virtues which their elders had, they lapse completely, failing to practise exterior observance or to acquire an interior spirit. And because the elders cannot give the example they would, they are afraid to admonish them verbally, knowing well what young men would say : “ Their advice is very good, no doubt ; but they don’t practise it themselves ” : and so the scandal grows deeper.

A third cause lies in this, that no one can teach what he has not learnt ; so that when the government of the order devolves ultim-

ately on these young men, they train up others to become just what they themselves are, the old-fashioned type of religious is held up to ridicule, there is no tradition of example, nay, more, one is thought so much the better than one's predecessors by how much the less one acknowledges those virtues which stamp the observant. As long as a certain outward show of discipline is maintained, the Office recited and the Church services carried out, people may be found to assert quite unblushingly that the state of the order was never so flourishing.

A fourth cause lies in the gradual introduction of lax customs, which are immediately laid hold on as affording precedents, and if some, with true zeal for the things of God, protest against them, others stoutly defend them and argue that what is tolerated anywhere should be allowed to them ; and thus the custom comes to be regarded as a law, its repetition found increasingly convenient, and then hardly indeed can it ever be rooted out. Superiors also, though not approving of such things, still, lest worse evil result and that they may go on living peaceably with their communities, pretend not to notice them. And when one custom thus built up comes to

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be tolerated, another is straightway introduced on the plea that it is a necessary consequent of the former, and thus both have to be tolerated.

A fifth cause is to be found in prolonged occupation over constant business affairs. Men's spiritual life gets frittered away, their interior spirit of prayer dies down, their manners change, they introduce evil habits into the cloister, and by lowering the general level of observance amongst the Brethren, strive to rid themselves of unpleasant reminders of their own need of amendment; their whole life comes to be taken up with worldly interests, and so seared do their consciences become that even where no calls to the outside world are forthcoming, they imprudently seek such as are of their own making, like the blind Samson in his prison dragging the mill-stone (Judges xvi.).

Besides these general causes of decline there are certain special ones which make their appearance in particular orders. Thus excessive want may lead religious to sin against poverty, by constraining individuals to provide, each one for himself, what is not provided for them in common. Then exces-

sive wealth, which leads them to become worldly and proud, and in many ways steeps them in vice. Again, undue familiarity with lay people, which leads to many a temptation against purity and to lukewarmness. The frequent change of superiors also, although good up to a point as facilitating the removal of the unfit, has, however, this great drawback that the good, being in hopes of speedy removal from office, have no incentive to face the question of reform boldly and persistently, whilst the unobservant, far from having to reconcile themselves to a change of life, aim only at getting their superiors out of the way. Then should a superior try at any time to raise the level of observance, he will find himself up against opposition in some form or other, or at best no help will be forthcoming from those whose help he needs. Thus the Abbot will stand in the Prior's way, or the Bishop in the Abbot's way, and so on in similar cases; and, of course, the unruly subjects will appeal to such as are known to regard complacently their manner of life. Finally, if some are found together in one house willing and anxious to restore observance, they are dispersed amongst other houses where observance is quite impracticable.

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Such and similar causes weaken the religious state, and indeed it would become worse and its reformation almost hopeless, were it not for God otherwise ordaining.

However, *to them that love God, all things work together unto good* (Rom. viii. 28), and what is not done in common may still be done individually. He who wishes to advance turns what is loss to others to his own gain, and what are ways of ruin to them become ways of life to him, by the grace of God. Just as the glory of good men is all the greater where, though living in the company of evil men—whose very presence is a temptation and exercises them in virtue—they yet do not imitate their example ; so also with good religious, never do they win so much merit from God as when, from the defects of tepid Brethren, they find themselves engaged in a constant struggle for personal sanctity against heavy odds. Such opportunities of gaining grace are too precious to be lightly for gone. Does not the Apostle (ii Cor. xi. 26), in enumerating those meritorious works of his, in which he glories as the excellent minister of Christ, mention also *perils from false brethren*, inasmuch as for him, as for other good men,

there lies herein an occasion for the unremitting exercise of virtue? Thus their bad example constitutes a veritable temptation to the good and a consequent occasion of victory. Then, with true zeal for justice, they are aroused at the sight of their vices and *on fire* (ibid. 29) at the harm done to the weak. Then also do they have compassion on them in their miserable state, as would a mother at seeing her son hastening to his ruin, and so labour all the more by good example, admonitions, prayer and great kindness to correct them. Patiently also do they bear with their perverse carriage and such insults as, for justice sake, may come their way; and suffer the contempt of men who judge them to be as they in whose company they live. Thus do they become more fearful and humble and solicitous lest they also fall; and lastly they thank God more than ever Who mercifully keeps them from becoming such. Let us note also that the virtue of the just, being contrasted with accompanying evil, shines more brightly and shows itself more than ever beautiful.

These and other good results are what God draws out from the mingling of good with bad. Just as in Heaven the joy of the elect

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is valued all the more as they appreciate more deeply all that the loss of God really means, so also in the Church the deformity of evil men serves in some sort to beautify the rectitude of the good, the Supernal Wisdom thus disposing things so that nothing wholly evil may find room in God's earthly kingdom.

THE SIX WINGS OF THE
SERAPHIM

PROLOGUE

Give an occasion to a wise man, and wisdom shall be added to him (Prov. ix. 9). A little thing is often an occasion to a wise man of growing wiser, nay, often he learns wisdom from the very stupidity of another, and so perhaps this work may furnish to newcomers, and to such superiors as may not be quite fully equipped for discerning between good and evil, an occasion of giving more thought to the matter and, in view of the defects mentioned herein, of aiming more carefully at what is higher and more useful, and even of glimpsing other things not noted here yet necessary to a religious for the good government of others. Even from the study of animal nature and industry experts have at times, as we read, learned much that has proved useful.

CHAPTER I

WHY HAVE SUPERIORS ?

THESE things I write to thee . . . that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God (i Tim. iii. 14, 15). The Apostle Paul wrote two letters to his disciple Timothy, whom he had appointed Bishop of the Church of Ephesus, in which he teaches him how he ought to behave in the office of ruler entrusted to him. He had learned already how to live holily, and now from the same source he was learning how to rule usefully and meritoriously : for to know how to live humbly as an inferior and peaceably as an equal and profitably as a superior are three very different things. "One sees many," says St. Bernard, "who live quietly under the rule of another, but who, if the restraining influence is removed, become restless at once and fall foul of everything. Again, there are others who live peaceably, in the main, with

everyone, hardly seeming to need a superior at all, yet quite unfit to be superiors themselves. They are content with being just ordinarily good, according to such measure of grace as God has meted out to them; they live sociably with the Brethren and get on well with them, but, once placed over them, are seen to be not only quite useless but positively incompetent and bad. Better, therefore, than these two classes are such as know how to be superiors" (cf. *Sermon Twenty-three on the Canticle of Canticles*, n. 8). Hence Moses teaches us that not just anybody may be appointed to rule the rest, but rather able and fit men, chosen out of all the people, *who may judge the people at all times* (Ex. xviii. 22). For he who undertakes the office of leading others on to holiness must first himself have learned, by constant exercise, the discipline of a holy life, and, by repeated practice, made a habit of it. Thus do we read of our Lord that first of all He practised what later He was to teach: *Jesus began to do and to teach* (Acts i. 1).

Beginners need a guide that they may be taught what they do not know, viz. such things as are necessary for their progress and

salvation ; what they ought to avoid ; what they ought to relish ; what they ought to practise ; what to hope for, and what to fear ; how to distinguish between the more and less perfect, and between degrees of badness as well : *You have need to be taught again what are the first elements of the words of God* (Heb. v. 12).

Secondly, they need a guide in the exercise of works of virtue, for a knowledge of good avails nothing without the practice of it ; no man, for example, studies medicine except with a view to practising it later, and merely hearing about something never gives a man such skill therein as does the practice of it. Now the untrained as a rule show themselves supine in their efforts after virtue, and need from time to time to be very much urged on thereto. Consequently masters, who wish their disciples to become perfect, are wont to exercise them in *works* of virtue—humble labour, fraternal kindness, mortification, alacrity, patience, chastity, silence, obedience, and so on—that the *virtues* themselves may be gradually brought into play, develop into habits and thus oust the corresponding vices, for as virtue grows stronger, vice grows

weaker. *Bring them* (your children) *up in the discipline and correction of the Lord* (Eph. vi. 4).

Thirdly, that they may be guarded from falling into sin on the one hand, and from indiscreet fervour on the other. Tender souls, and those not yet weaned from affection for sin, are often kept away from the vortex of vice by fear of men, rather than of God, and it is consequently a good thing for such to be under the rule of superiors, that they may be kept away from danger, just as by a mother's warning little ones are kept back from the dangers of the sea or from the teeth of wolves : *Counsel shall keep thee, and prudence shall preserve thee, that thou mayest be delivered from the evil way, and from the man that speaketh perverse things* (Prov. ii. 11, 12).

Lastly, that they may be corrected ; for sin starts a man on a downward path, like fever, which so often leads on to further ills, or like a wound which, untended, will fester. He who falls into sin, with difficulty corrects himself, if he be not helped by one stronger, and thus it is that God wishes superiors to be set over the rest. Then if these fall into sin or are in any way negligent or incautious,

WHY HAVE SUPERIORS?

they may be set right by admonition and correction, or even by stern measures and punishment, whereas if left to themselves, they might possibly not realize their fault, or perhaps not bother about it, and so wallow longer still in the mire, and sink the deeper : *and some indeed reprove, being judged* (Jude 22). Hence they must be humbly submissive to a superior, for none can hope to be healed who follow not a doctor's advice, and the passions of vice are as diseases in a man : *He gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases* (Luke ix. 1).

Only those do not need superiors who are so interiorly enlightened as to be wholly masters of all they ought to know, proof against specious deception on the part of men, the devil and their own senses, divinely possessed of the gift of discernment of spirits : *everywhere and in all things I am instructed* (Philipp. iv. 12). Then they should be so filled with the spirit of devotion, as without any stimulus from without to tend faithfully forward towards the most perfect exercise of virtue, *forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before* (Philipp. iii. 13). Moreover, they

should be such lovers of what is good as to have an almost instinctive horror of what is evil, carefully keeping clear of any kind of questionable conduct, and living at peace with all men : *Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentiles* (i Cor. x. 32). Then they ought to be so thoroughly humble as not to be elated by such good qualities as they may possess, nor yet to imagine defects have no place in them, but rather ought they, after skilfully detecting any excess in thought, word or omission, by strenuous self-discipline to emend themselves. And finally they must be so solidly grounded in all this as to be quite proof against the enervating influences of dissipation and distractions, trials and anxious fears : *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ ?* (Rom. viii. 35.)

However, since such people are very rare, it follows that few indeed are they who may safely live away from the yoke of obedience ; and hence even superiors, that their rule may be more fruitful and wise, need to be subject to others set over them, and so on up to the Supreme Pontiff, who, as Christ's Vicar, is head of the whole militant Church.

Whoever, then, are to be useful superiors must be possessed of certain good qualities,

of which some have relation to themselves, whereby they may live blamelessly, others to their superiors, whereby, in such matters as need be, they may show themselves humbly submissive, and others, finally, to their subjects, whereby they may rule them profitably, and lead them forward to higher things. Although, however, he who, in virtue of his office, is set to teach all virtues, should be himself eminently possessed thereof, . . .¹ still the good ruler of souls, especially a religious, ought to be particularly distinguished by certain virtues, like the seraphim of whom Isaias wrote (vi. 2), who stand foremost among the celestial spirits, adorned with six wings. And possibly it was in such fashion as this that the Lord appeared to our most holy father Francis, in that glorious vision, when He adorned him with the marks of His Passion, that He might show that they who would profitably rule his family, should, in spiritual fashion, be six-winged too. And thus also *the four living creatures had each of them six wings* (Apoc. iv. 8).

¹ I have omitted an obscure phrase on the perfection of the number *six*.—*Tr.*

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST WING : ON ZEAL FOR JUSTICE

THE first qualification in a ruler of souls is zeal for justice, of such kind that he cannot bear unmoved anything unjust, either in himself or in others. A man's goodness is to be measured by the vigour and purity of motive with which he hates what is evil ; for in proportion as one loves something, so does one grieve over its loss. Hence let us note four classes of religious or priests whom we are accustomed to speak of as good.

Firstly, there are those who, though refraining from evil, make no effort to exercise themselves in good works. They exist quietly and peaceably with others, offending none, nor by open depravity causing scandal of any kind : *these men were good enough to us, and gave us no trouble* (i Kings xxv. 15¹).

¹ I have ventured to translate the Vulgate *satis boni* as above, not by the usual *very good*.—*Tr.*

For we are accustomed to speak of as good those who are of a mild disposition and sociably inclined towards everyone, though, as far as the exercise of virtue goes, they may show themselves somewhat remiss. Thus newly baptized children are similarly spoken of as good.

The second group is better, consisting of those who not merely refrain from what is wrong, but moreover exercise themselves often in good works, in sobriety, chastity, humility, fraternal charity, constancy in prayer, and such like, of all of which they realize the value. But here is what characterizes them—inasmuch as they do not neglect any of those things they know they can do, they imagine in consequence that the good they do suffices, and do not glow with desires of a sanctity yet fuller and more perfect. It is enough for them that they keep vigil, or that they pray, or that they give something to God by way of fasting or work, and so on ; and in these things they rest content, leaving higher things to others : *I have found that nothing is better than for a man to rejoice in his work, and that this is his portion* (Eccles. iii. 22).

The third group is better still. It consists of those who hate and flee from what is evil, carefully exercise themselves in the good they are capable of and then, when they have done all they can, still consider they have done but little compared with what they desire to do, knowing, as the Apostle says, that *bodily exercise is profitable to little* (i Tim. iv. 8). And so they earnestly long for interior illumination and the grace of inward devotion, and a familiar knowledge of God, and to experience His love, considering themselves as nothing and as having nothing, and receiving no consolation whatever from temporal or spiritual things, as long as they do not enjoy as they wish the full exercise of such virtues and the sweetness of devotion. However, neither the vices of others nor the dangers they are in of sin kindle within them any flame of zealous fervour, for, though they would like all to be good and holy, still, where they do not find this, no sword of sorrow wounds them, thinking only as they do of themselves and God. Such, if called to rule others, are found to be unfit, for they aim rather at being undisturbed themselves than at helping others: *Can I leave my sweetness, and my delicious fruits, and go to be*

promoted among the other trees? (Judges ix. 11).

The fourth is the best group, comprising those who, besides possessing the holiness and good qualities of the others, are aflame with zeal for justice and for souls, drawing no consolation from their own advance in perfection unless they are leading others with them to God, following herein the example of the Lord Who, though ever possessed of the fullness of joy, was not content to be alone in glory, but, taking the form of a servant, went forth to bring, by word and work, many children into glory with Him. Zeal for justice, like the twice dyed scarlet of which we read in *Exodus* (xxvi. 1), glows with the doubled splendour of charity, of love, that is, for God and for one's neighbour. True love of God not only seeks to enjoy His sweetness in the closest of union with Him, but longs also to see His will accomplished and due service paid Him and His honour raised on high: it wishes Him to be acknowledged by all, and loved and served by all, and honoured above all things. Love of one's neighbour desires not merely his bodily health and temporal well-

being, but, much more, his eternal salvation. Where, then, this charity is more perfect, there will the desire of promoting such things be more fervent and zeal more unremitting, and the joy indeed all the purer when success is won. For charity *seeketh not her own* (i Cor. xiii. 5), but the things of God ; and so the more you love God, and in all sincerity long for the things of God, the more will you grieve for the offence against God when you see Him unrecognized by men and consequently unhonoured, unloved by men and not obeyed, and His worship silenced and His adversaries many and content ; and the more you love the salvation of your neighbour, the more will you be troubled at his loss and at what hinders his advance.

Now, although this charity is demanded of all God's friends, of God's vicars it is especially so, for, as men after God's own heart, they should be moved with a love of justice and a hatred of iniquity : *thou hast loved justice* (Ps. 44 : 8). For our present purpose, *justice* may be regarded as lying in the observance of all things that are needed both for the salvation of souls and for their advance in perfection.

Now of these some originate in the *Divine Law*, as, e.g. the virtues properly so-called, humility, chastity, charity, forbearance and the like, without which no one at any time could be saved. To these the commandments of God in the Old and New Testaments have special reference, as our Lord Himself said, in speaking of the love of God and one's neighbour: *on these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets* (Math. xxii. 40).

Others proceed from *Human Law*, operating in the name of God, such as those precepts which the Church in her Canon Law lays down for the common good, e.g. the rite to be used in the administration of the sacraments, and other matters of positive precept. The Canons bind all, both clerics and lay people, and every person should observe such as have special reference to his own state.

Other obligations originate in a *Personal Vow*—obligations which none are bound to assume, but which, when freely vowed, bind as by divine precept. Such are continence among religious, and obedience and the abdication of private property and similar monastic obligations which by their Rule or Statutes may be imposed upon the professed

religious of an order. *When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it : because the Lord thy God will require it. And if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for a sin. If thou wilt not promise, thou shalt be without sin. But that which is once gone out of thy lips, thou shalt observe, and shalt do as thou hast promised to the Lord thy God, and hast spoken with thy own will and with thy own mouth* (Deut. xxiii. 21-23).

Finally, there are certain things which draw their binding force from the influence they have on spiritual progress, although not otherwise necessary for salvation. Such are all things which concern the Divine Office and other spiritual exercises of a religious community, and such detailed regulations as deal with the silence, and food and clothing, and work, and spiritual exercises and prayer ; of all of which the observance in different orders varies according to what has been deemed expedient.

Now, although failure in the observance of such things as these does not necessarily imperil one's salvation, still their transgression is always a deformity in a religious and is calculated besides to hinder the spiritual progress and development of others. Where,

however, there is a true love of justice, there is found zeal to promote such observances individually and amongst others, and joy at sight of them solicitously maintained, and burning, sorrowful indignation at sight of their transgression : *Have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated thee, and pined away because of thy enemies?* (Psalm 138 : 21). Yet will such a one enjoy throughout an interior spirit of discernment so as only to grieve deeply over what are really grave transgressions, taking less account of smaller things. It is indeed the mark of a level-headed man to weigh things as they are, good or bad, and not, like some foolish people, to think little at times of big things and to magnify the trivial, judging motes to be beams, straining out gnats and swallowing camels : *You tithe mint and rue, and leave the weightier things* (cf. Luke xi. 42 and Matt. xxiii. 23). Such people are carried away herein by their own impetuosity rather than actuated by the spirit of God. A neglected inclination in choir elicits a far more heated reproof than long uncharitable conversations about the brethren : a wrong versicle recited or some little rubric omitted raises a far greater storm of indignation than a real scandal.

Principally, then, should we guard against and grieve over any transgression of the precepts of God ; then of the inviolable precepts of holy Church ; then of those things which each one, by free vow, has made of vital necessity for himself, i.e. all the regular observances of religious life and particularly such things as bind under sin. Then should we shun everything that is wrong or that has any appearance of being so, avarice, pride, envy, gluttony, anger, undue familiarities, disobedience and similar vices which turn foetid that good odour of religious, wherewith the faithful ought to be edified ; and instead of being strengthened by good example, learning what to do and what to avoid, they are weakened by scandal : *the name of God through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles* (Rom. ii. 24). Such scandal is far less easily made good than hidden sins, though these may in themselves be much greater, for the latter can be healed by private penance, whereas scandal can hardly be removed from the hearts of all whom perchance it may reach.

Then, secondly, care should be taken not to disturb that spirit of interior prayer on which all true religious life is based and by which all

exterior observances are nourished. For arid indeed is that religious life which is not fattened by this oil of devotion; unstable is that outward structure of good works which is not held together by devout and frequent prayer, like the wall of which we read in Ezechiel xiii. 14, *daubed with untempered mortar*. In any order, where the fervour of devotion has grown cold, the exercise of other virtues also begins to fail, and ruin draws on apace. The lamps of the fatuous virgins, being without oil, went out (cf. Math. xxv).

Lastly, care must be taken not to neglect exterior observance. This is necessary to maintain the orderliness and beauty of the religious life and to facilitate spiritual progress, and its neglect is the sign of a coarsened conscience and of inward dissipation. The observance of this regular discipline is not laid down as though other forms of life were wrong, but simply because observance maintains a uniform and decent solidarity of conventual life, preventing people from living and acting just as they please and thereby, as may easily happen, disturbing others. Now, although, in all such observances which do not bind under sin but only in virtue of some

ordinance, the main care should always be to have them well observed, still this does not mean that any isolated and chance transgression should give rise in a superior to scruples and fears ; provided always there is no danger of a bad custom being introduced and, in default of correction, spreading. Should such danger appear, then indeed, to avoid a train of evil results, the zeal for discipline must not slumber.

Bearing, then, such general principles in mind, let us now note that he who is truly zealous for justice must in the first place see to it that he does not himself in any way act amiss or teach what is evil ; then, secondly, that he does not acquiesce in or allow such conduct in others, however persistent they may be in importuning him or in circumventing his ordinations ; thirdly, that he in no way seems to encourage the doing in his absence or without his permission, of things which he could not openly permit ; fourthly, that he does not simulate ignorance, saying nothing on the pretence of seeing nothing, whereas it is his duty to charge such as violate observance, and convince them of the evil of

their ways, lest they become emboldened and go to even greater lengths ; fifthly, that he allow no grave transgression to go unpunished, for the punishment of sin is productive of good inasmuch as it deters the offender from sinning further : *sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee* (John v. 14) ; and satisfies for sin, keeping off the more terrible punishments God holds in store : *Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell* (Prov. xxiii. 14). Then others are taught thereby to refrain from the like offences : *The wicked man being scourged, the fool shall be wiser* (Prov. xix. 25) ; i.e. the young and inexperienced will learn to walk more cautiously. Finally, the superior himself, vicar of the Supreme Judge, by thus accomplishing his duty, frees his soul from the sin of negligence. Because Heli acted otherwise, the sentence of death fell not only on his sinning sons but on himself too (i Kings iv. 11 and 18).

Herein may be seen the real difference between observant and relaxed orders. Not that in observant communities no disorders are ever found, but that none pass unchallenged, all that may tend thereto is rigorously excluded, those who show themselves of an incorrigibly evil influence are

eliminated, and the good helped on and encouraged to persevere and grow always better. For since in the community of the angels, before they were confirmed in grace, and in the apostolic college, under the very rule of Christ Himself, grave disorders were found, what Holy Order of men on earth will dare to arrogate to itself the prerogative of being quite without stain? Even though most of its members might, by God's grace, be free from sin, yet not all: *You are clean, but not all* (John xiii. 10).

It is expedient, however, for the good—as long as they are here in this state of probation—to have some unworthy people in their midst, who may be an occasion for them of greater merit, on whom, in their evil ways, they may have compassion, against whom their zeal may take fire, for whose correction they may labour, like whom they may fear to become, from whom temptations may arise, by whom they may even be persecuted, and, at sight of whom, humbled and confounded, and being different from whom they may be admonished of the thanks they owe to Him Who has preserved them from becoming such. If, however, good religious are deprived of such occasions of exercising virtue, their

merit will be all the less : *For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap* (Gal. vi. 8).

This does not mean that the disorderly are to be loved and encouraged, but simply that where the evil is hidden and innocuous, and there is hope of amendment, they are to be tolerated. Should, however, the contrary be the case, then their toleration becomes fraught with much evil, and, unless they are got rid of, there is danger of their evil ways being thought pleasing to the good. Till such action becomes necessary, let them be now punished by stern admonition, correction, humiliation and pain, and now soothed with kindly exhortation, consoling advice, prayer and promises, if perchance they may be healed of their weakness and grow strong again. Occasions of sin and likely temptations are to be debarred them—a sound procedure even for the good—lest the opportunity of evil should lead them to become worse than they are already.

The superior, who is God's vicar, *whom his lord setteth over his family* (Luke xii. 42), and to whom, for that reason, subjects should render obedience as to the Lord, if he does

not correct delinquents, if he allows evil ways to grow under him, and bad customs to arise or, where such have arisen, to grow strong and spread, if he sees regular observance going to the wall and relaxations multiplying, and does not do his best to obviate such evils, present and imminent, then threefold will be the account he must render unto God.

Firstly, for his negligence in not doing that to which, by his office, he was bound : *Because being ministers of his kingdom, you have not judged rightly, nor kept the law of Justice, nor walked according to the will of God. Horribly and speedily will he appear to you : for a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule* (Wisdom vi. 5, 6).

Secondly, for all the sins of his subjects which he could and should have corrected and guarded them from, and which will be imputed to him : *if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but I will require his blood at thy hand* (Ezekiel xxxiii. 8).

Thirdly, for abusing the honourable authority committed to him, turning it to his own convenience and personal glory, and not utilizing it for the purpose with which he was entrusted with it : *Take ye away therefore the*

talent from him, . . . and the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Math. xxv. 28, 30).

Let then the good and zealous superior show his love for God by promoting in himself and others the accomplishment of His good pleasure: never, in let-live fashion, should he slacken off in this zeal, or grow weary of the labour; never should he allow himself to be turned aside by contrary counsel, or circumvented by guile, or won over by friendship or flattery, or moved by threats; never let him despair of fulfilling his office, even in face of age-long evil customs.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND WING : ON DEVOTEDNESS

THE second wing or quality necessary in an ecclesiastical superior is devotedness or fraternal compassion. Just as the love of God enkindles his zeal for justice, so love of the Brethren makes him devoted ; for, though vice is to be scourged with the rods of punishment, frailty is to be supported by the staff of kindness : *Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me* (Psalm 22 : 4) : *Shall I come to you with a rod ; or in charity, and in the spirit of meekness ?* (i Cor. iv. 21). Thus also the good Samaritan poured the smarting wine of zeal, and the soothing oil of devotedness into the wounds of him who had been abandoned half-dead.

Weakness of body is one thing, and instability of mind another, and both need compassion. Bodily infirmity is of three kinds. Firstly, there are the bed-ridden, those who are really labouring under acute and serious

illness. Then there are those who can manage to crawl about the house, and even sometimes make their way into the garden, but who are nevertheless often in real pain, those suffering from such things as gout or fistula or dropsy (*ponderosi*?). Then, lastly, there are those who have got no definite complaint, but who are just very weak and languid, old people or those who are temporarily run down after heavy work, or such as are habitually delicate, and at times quite prostrate. Threefold, accordingly, is the attention required: medicinal remedies come in the first place, if such are to be had and likely to prove useful: secondly, dispensations in such matters as food and clothing and midnight-office: and, lastly, exemptions from their normal duties, whether inside or outside the house. Such attention will vary according to the needs of the individual; thus medicine is more specially for the first group, and dispensations for the second, and exemptions for the third, according as each may require.

Every kindness ought to be shown to the weak and suffering, for after all their pain comes from God, and if men take it on themselves to add to their difficulties, then does

their affliction call aloud to the Father of mercies against those that trouble them : *Because they have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten ; and they have added to the grief of my wounds* (Psalm 68 : 27). The infirm religious, who cannot help himself in his affliction, is all the more overwhelmed when those, whose duty it is, do not console him, or, in kindly fashion, relieve him of his work, or assist him in his needs : *In thy sight are all they that afflict me ; my heart hath expected reproach and misery. And I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none : and for one that would comfort me, and I found none. And they gave me gall (upbraiding) for my food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar (reproaches) to drink. Let their table become as a snare before them . . .* (Psalm 68 : 21-23).

The worthy superior, then, acknowledges himself to be not the master but the father of his Community, and shows that he is out to help and not to tyrannize over them, not looking upon them as so much cattle or as hired servants, but as sons and heirs, no less than he, of the Heavenly Kingdom, treating them as he would wish to be treated himself, were he ever to find himself in like need.

Those who enjoy robust health have no idea what life seems to those who do not, and are intolerant in consequence ; sickness itself is the only thing to open their eyes. And although, as they maintain, people often make themselves out to be worse than they really are, is that a reason for judging everyone a hypocrite ? God acted quite otherwise, and was ready to be generous to many who did not deserve it, for the sake of the few who did (cf. Gen. xviii. 22 seq.).

Now, for three reasons do the weak in health need looking after with true devotedness, more than do the strong and robust. Firstly, to keep them alive, for they cannot adequately look after themselves, and if others do not provide for them, they must necessarily get weaker and die : *He that is cast off should not altogether perish* (ii Kings xiv. 14). Secondly, to restore them to that degree of health and strength, of which sickness has deprived them. Those who are healthy and strong take food in order to maintain what they already have ; the sickly and weak, however, need ample nourishment, not merely to maintain the little strength they have, lest they lose it altogether, but

also to regain what they have lost : *from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away* (Math. xxv. 29). And, thirdly, to cheer them up, for it is a great consolation to those in pain to find that others are considerate towards them, and doing all they can to get them well again : *Blessed be ye of the Lord, for you have pitied my case* (i Kings xxiii. 21).

Some may urge, however, that it is all very well to do one's best for those of whose recovery reasonable hopes are entertained, but where no such presumption that they will ever get better exists, it is simply throwing money away. This would be perfectly true if we looked after the sick not for the love of God, but on principles of pure human economy. A superior who looks after the sick that he may recoup through their subsequent ministry what he has expended on their cure, is depriving himself of the merit of charity. The more hopeless the disease, the more splendid is the devotion and unselfish the charity of those who strive to alleviate it. Consequently, it is an excellent thing for superiors to have passed through a period of bad health themselves, that they may know how to be considerate towards others : *We have not a*

high-priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities (Heb. iv. 15).

The unstable of mind are also of three kinds. Firstly, those who, in default of solid piety, or on the impulse of temptation, very easily take scandal and fall into sin, who waver on the least occasion, and are constantly on the verge of sin : *Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you* (i Cor. xi. 30). Then, there are those who, albeit men of goodwill and earnest, still when slightly corrected, or much more when sternly reprimanded, become faint-hearted at once and either give up everything in despair as hopeless, or else break out into violent impatience. They are sorry for it afterwards, but the evil results in others are not so easily removed : *Now we that are stronger ought to bear the infirmities of the weak* (Rom. xv. 1). Finally, there are the generally indifferent : men who, in the various exercises of devotion, are often inconstant, who, even though they resist, find themselves constantly a prey to the hot waves of passion, at one time excessively joyful, at another excessively angry, or again overrun by feelings of bitterness or envy, or by sensual passions and gluttony and other vices both

carnal and spiritual : *Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak* (Psalm 6 : 3).

These weaknesses should be met by the following remedies. Sources of scandal and occasions of sin should be removed, lest anything harmful be seen or heard, and also all unnecessary going abroad should be restrained : *Dina went out to see the women of that country* and was corrupted (cf. Gen. xxxiv. 1). Then, such people should be strengthened by sound advice, given frequently, but with great patience : never, till they are stable again, should they be harshly upbraided or punished, for such only results in greater agitation : *Fathers, provoke not your children to indignation, lest they be discouraged* (Col. iii. 21). To worry still further a person already sufficiently disturbed in himself is like goading on to bite a dog actually growling : rather must we bear with even temper the ways and weaknesses of others : *for all things cannot be in men* (Ecclus. xvii. 29).

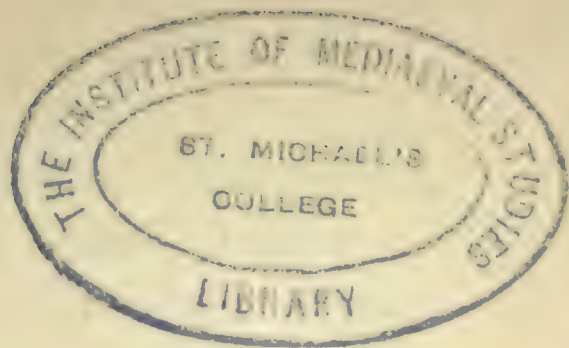
Just as very learned people readily excuse the ineptitudes of which illiterate and less cultured people may be guilty, so also should the holy charitably bear with the defects of others—knowing that all cannot be equally

perfect—and not lay on them—little and weak ones, may be, in Christ—burdens heavier than they may bear, or demand aught from them beyond their strength : *My Lord, thou knowest that I have with me tender children, and sheep, and kine with young : which if I should cause to be overdriven, in one day all the flocks will die* (Gen. xxxiii. 13), which means to say that those who would urge on the young and such as, though not without an embryonic goodwill, are still imperfect, demanding of them a greater measure of sanctity than the grace they have warrants, will simply end by extinguishing in them altogether, by their indiscreet ways, such piety as they already possess. Thus did St. Paul say to the *Thessalonians* (ii. 7) : *We became little ones in the midst of you, as if a nurse should cherish her children*, which means that he spoke sweetly to them, in all humility and kindness, condescending to their weakness and imperfection. Of harsh and inconsiderate superiors we find God thus complaining : *The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed, that which was broken you have not bound up, and that which was driven away you have not brought again, neither have you sought that which was lost : but you ruled*

over them with rigour and with a high hand (Ezechiel xxxiv. 4). Similarly writes St. Bernard :—

“ Learn that you ought to be as mothers not masters to your subjects ; study to make yourselves loved rather than feared ; and if there be need sometimes for severity, let it be that of a father not of a tyrant. Shew yourselves mothers in affection, fathers in reproof. Be gentle, not harsh ; be not forward to inflict stripes ; let the view of the maternal bosom promise indulgence ; let the hearts (of those under you) grow fat with milk, not swell with anger. Why do you lay your heavy yoke upon those whose burden it is rather your duty to bear ? ”
(*Sermons on the Canticle of Canticles* : No. xxiii, § 2, trans. Eales, 1895.)

Carry them in thy bosom as the nurse is wont to carry the little infant, and bear them into the land for which thou hast sworn to their fathers (Num. xi. 12).



CHAPTER IV

THE THIRD WING : ON PATIENCE

THE third wing or quality for a religious superior is patience and an unfailing longanimity. The roof of a tent, if it is to keep everything clean and tidy within, must needs receive on itself dust, rain and storm ; so too superiors, in faithfully shielding their subjects from the whirlwind of sin, must needs expose themselves often to many and deep adversities. Just so will a bird, in defence of its young, face boldly the big bird of prey.

On three grounds most particularly would patience seem to be necessary for superiors. Firstly, in view of the amount of work they have to busy themselves with, and their many cares, and often quite unlooked-for duties. The maintenance of spiritual discipline and the providing of the necessaries of life, these are two duties constantly weighing on them. Thus were the Apostles busy not merely about spiritual things, but about the temporal

needs of the faithful also, and particularly of the poor : *James and Cephas and John . . . gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship : that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision*—for the preaching, that is, of the Gospel—*Only that we should be mindful of the poor : which same thing also I was careful to do* (Gal. ii. 9, 10). Our Lord also, as St. Mark tells us (Mk. vi. and viii.), looked after the crowds whom He was nourishing spiritually with the words of life, by providing them also with bread in the desert, seeing they had no means of getting it elsewhere. Various difficulties also are continually arising, due either to domestic cares or external causes, in which superiors are necessarily implicated at times, and which need much anxious thought as to how they are to be dealt with. The result of it all is much hard work, the need of being constantly up and about and of often having to stay up late at night, a big correspondence and other worries, for all of which patience is necessary. Thus Moses, the meekest of men and familiar friend of God, was quite at his wit's end to know how to deal with the many duties consequent on his wide charge : *I alone am not able to bear your business, and the charge of*

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you and your differences. Let me have from among you wise and understanding men, and such whose conversation is approved among your tribes, that I may appoint them your rulers (Deut. i. 12, 13).

Secondly, patience is necessary for a superior on account of the tardy progress of those in whose interests he is ever wearily labouring. For he sees but few make any progress at all, and even where, after many and great efforts, some slight improvement is perceptible, he has to witness only too often a supine relapse in face of those varied difficulties and obstacles which beset the path of spiritual advancement. Like one who though sowing much sees little spring up therefrom, he begins to despair almost of ever seeing at all any fruit of his labours. Then he notices that his own statutes and ordinations are at times but negligently kept and fulfilled, evil begins to insinuate itself under specious disguises, yet he fears to repress it as such, for it has been made to appear as good. Much excellent work is thus undone and the way to abuses opened wider than ever. Thus, for example, in view of promoting the salvation of souls, we are inclined to accept more subjects than

we can conveniently provide for, and numbers in the end will obscure our poverty, for the more there are, the more will there be of those who want much and cannot bear to be without. What follows from this but more gadding abroad than ever in search of necessities, the devising of new begging-expedients, and less care in keeping the rule in matters of property. The quiet of devotion is extinguished, religious customs are quite forgotten, the Brethren come to regard as normal the practice of spending their time outside, hunting out for carnal amenities, and growing familiar with people beyond all bounds ; penitents are valued for their presents, the welfare of souls is trafficked in, the rich are fawned upon, sumptuous convents arise, scandal passes unheeded, and God's honour, which should be enhanced by our holy lives, and the consequent edification of others, is by these contrary practices trampled down.

Another example of evil masquerading as good may be found in the premature promotion to "orders" of young and unproved men, allowing them to preach and hear confessions and choosing them as superiors. Then we find many who have an outwardly

imposing presence but who—and it is thus God sees them—have let the purity of the religious spirit grow dim : men with no idea of what the religious life really stands for, no relish for divine things, imagining the entirety of spiritual force to lie in polished manners, zealously defending such an attitude, and heedless of true interior virtue.

Faced with these facts and many another such, and judging of them in truth, the spiritually-minded superior must needs be both depressed and indignant ; and yet, being unable to correct them as he would, he is wonderfully exercised in the virtue of patience: *My zeal hath made me pine away* (Psalm 118 : 139) : *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up* (Psalm 68 : 10).

Thirdly, Patience is necessary on account of the ingratitude of those for whom he labours with such care. Whatever he does, he finds he can hardly ever satisfy all ; some will be found to complain that he might have acted otherwise and better, had he wished. He will be frequently in doubt as to whether he ought to yield to their importunities and acquiesce in everything they want, or rather hold rigidly to what he himself believes to be

more expedient : . . . *what I shall choose I know not. But I am straitened between two : having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ* (Philipp. i. 22, 23). Again, they will take hold of much that he does and interpret it in a wrong sense, and will then go to his room and complain, and accuse and disparage him, and what he thought to be of service to God and to them, they convert into a stumbling block, and the whole thing seems almost irremediable, as he can arrange or do nothing whatever without some being always found to be displeased and take umbrage thereat. Nay, more—some will even resist him to his face or attack him by letter, openly contemning him and inciting others thereto, or perhaps devise cunning expedients for hindering him in doing what he ought.

Against these and other such-like worrying hindrances let him aim at opposing a triple shield of patience. Firstly, let him answer each one quietly, sensibly and kindly, checking his own impetuous zeal, and showing no impatience at all in word or face or gesture. By patience he will get much more, perhaps at last win over altogether, those whom, were

he to get excited, he would simply alienate the more. Thus did Gedeon, speaking gently, check the tumultuous wrath of the men of Ephraim who were quarrelling with him most bitterly (cf. Judges viii. 1-3).—*A mild answer breaketh wrath : but a harsh word stirreth up fury* (Prov. xv. 1). Scarcely ever is anger soothed by anger, nor yet vice healed by vice. Rather in many ways does an impatient superior undermine the good which he ought to promote.

Thus he scandalizes others : *He that is impatient exalteth his folly* (Prov. xiv. 29), that is by laying it bare to others.

He becomes an object of contempt to his community and others : *He that is vain and foolish shall be exposed to contempt* (Prov. xii. 8).

He is hated and shunned : *A man full of tongue is terrible in his city, and he that is rash in his word shall be hateful* (Ecclus. ix. 25).

He provokes others to anger : *A passionate man stirreth up strifes : he that is patient appeaseth those that are stirred up* (Prov. xv. 8).

Subjects are afraid of making known their needs : *If we begin to speak to thee, perhaps thou wilt take it ill* (Job iv. 2).

He fills the house with murmuring and bitterness : *He that troubleth his own house*

shall inherit the winds (Prov. xi. 29), that is of sullen resentment.

He alienates the timid and makes them an easy prey to discouragement : *A spirit that is easily angered, who can bear ?* (Prov. xviii. 14).

Lastly, no one dares to bring to his notice things that want attending to : *He is a son of Belial, so that no man can speak to him* (i Kings xxv. 17).

Secondly, let him aim at being a man of peace, neither avenging himself on such as may have injured him, nor bearing malice against them in his heart, nor ceasing to take any interest in them, nor trying to get them removed elsewhere, but rather guarding them all the more willingly that he may thus edify them and others, benefiting the ungrateful and thereby exercising himself in virtue. Such is the example left us by the great Shepherd of Souls : *You shall be the sons of the Highest : for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil* (Luke vi. 35). It is the proper office of a superior to teach men to lead a virtuous life : whom then can he teach if he make a point of putting at a distance from him those who need instruction ? If a doctor flies from the sick, whom will he cure ? If a strong young soldier declines battle, how

shall he win triumph and glory? If the business man neglects opportunities, how shall he ever become rich? Thus it is that we find so many Bishops and religious superiors among the saints. By doing good to others and patiently helping them in spite of opposition, they attained to the highest degree of sanctity themselves, precisely in virtue of the office they held: *If a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work* (i Tim. iii. 1).

Thirdly, let him be patient, that he may not fail in his willing resolve to accomplish carefully the duties of his office, despite all the weary work this means for him, and the tardy progress of others and their querulous complaints and such like burdens, because a path like this leads to great heights of merit: *Do you therefore take courage, and let not your hands be weakened: for there shall be a reward for your work* (ii Paralip. xv. 7). The hands of a superior are *energy* at his duties and *patience* amidst his worries; and where these are not being weakened by sloth and an overbearing manner, an eternal reward is being built up for him.

By such difficulties as these, then, a superior is purified from the dust of sin which settles silently on all weak human souls: *In many*

things we all offend (St. James iii. 2). Where much has to be done, many little failings are bound to creep in, and from these a superior should cleanse himself here, that he be not more heavily punished hereafter: *If he commit any iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men* (ii Kings vii. 14). Inasmuch also as he is depressed by these things, he is thereby preserved from the tumour of pride which perilously dogs the steps of those in office. Their high position, their freedom, the very good they do, all tend to raise their self-esteem if the yoke of adversity be not there to bend their presumptuous necks and preserve them from the whirlwind of pride: *Teaching he instructeth them in what they are to learn. That he may withdraw a man from the things he is doing, and may deliver him from pride. Rescuing his soul from corruption: and his life from passing to the sword* (Job xxxii. 16-18). Humiliating contradiction is indeed a great safeguard for a superior and a real pledge of progress, and without it prosperity and success soon lead to vapid presumption. Thus David, a man of God's heart and choice, when weighed down by adversity, was humble and most devout, but when raised up and

prosperous, fell deeply into sin : *It is good for me that thou hast humbled me* (Psalm 118 : 71).

Then, as we noted above, his is an open road to much merit, for not only does he win glory for the good he promotes in others and in himself, but also there awaits him a crown of glory for the adversities he suffers. He is as gold which, after being tested by fire, becomes brighter and more precious than ever : *as gold in the furnace he hath proved them* (Wisdom iii. 6). We should remember, also, that spiritual progress often goes on unperceived, a man growing stronger in proportion as he seems to himself to be weaker : *So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up whilst he knoweth not* (Mark iv. 26, 27).

Finally, do not let us be surprised at finding that whatever efforts a superior may make, he cannot possibly succeed with everyone, since even God's work is not successful in all, *for many are called, but few chosen* (Math. xx. 16). All seeds do not mature, and men who dig for treasure willingly displace much earth, if they may find thereby but a little of gold, or may be, of silver. Thus

the value of a good superior must rather be measured in terms of loss which his absence would entail, like light, of which the value is most realized when it is absent. A superior, then, should take courage in the midst of his toil from the thought that he merits no less there where his efforts fail altogether or produce but little fruit, as where they are fully successful. The Apostle did not say : *Every man shall receive his own reward* according to his success, but *according to his own labour*, for to give *the increase* is God's work (cf. i Cor. iii. 8, 7). The unwilling demand far more work from a teacher than does a docile disciple, and so, according to a just estimate, his labour there is all the more meritorious. On barren and rocky soil the husbandman labours much, and poor though the results may be, they are all the more creditable to him, and often what is won with difficulty is in proportion sold for more.

CHAPTER V

THE FOURTH WING : ON AN EXEMPLARY LIFE

THE fourth wing or quality for a religious superior is that he should be a man of exemplary life. It is for him to be the norm of life for the rest, so that what he teaches in words he should show forth in actions, like a master in geometry who traces in the sand the figures required for proving his propositions, that they may thus be more easily grasped : *Jesus began to do and to teach* (Acts i. 1) : *I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also* (John xiii. 15) : *What you shall see me do, do you the same* (Judges vii. 17).

Although, however, a superior should stand out before his community as an example, not merely of such virtues as we have already mentioned, but, indeed, of every virtue, still there are three of very special importance—observance of the common life, gentleness of manner, and a very upright judgment : *In*

all things show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity (Titus ii. 7).

As for the *common life*, let him observe it with the rest in food and clothing and work. Let him not spend his time at social functions and dinners, whilst his community eat and drink but sparingly at home. His clothing should be in nothing different from that of the others, seeing that he has professed the same Rule as they ; neither should he withdraw from the common tasks he himself arranges for the rest. If a shepherd isolates himself from his flock, he exposes the sheep to the cunning of wolves. Let him be strong with the strong, and weak with the weak : *To the weak I became weak—a model of condescension—that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men, that I might save all* (i Cor. ix. 22). If, when in health, he lives a soft life, he makes others soft by force of example ; if, when unwell, he rejects the usual remedies, he discourages others by implying either that he expects them to do likewise when they are unwell, or that he will be equally indifferent to their own recovery. A soldier strives all the more

keenly if he sees his officer shouldering with him the same burdens and dangers. *All the time that the Lord Jesus came in, and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us* (Acts i. 21, 22), that is, from the time He first gathered disciples round Him after His baptism till He ascended to the Father, He has taught us by constant example, *coming in*, by living familiarly with His disciples, and *going out*, by, on fitting occasions, mingling profitably with the crowd.

Then, secondly, let him be *gentle in his manner*, not appearing to think a lot of himself, and playing the Prelate, but showing rather that he bears the burden by constraint and in fear, and would prefer to be a simple religious, judging those over whom he is set as better than himself, and regarding himself as their servant rather than as their master and lord: *He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is the leader, as he that serveth . . . I am in the midst of you, as he that serveth* (Luke xxii. 26, 27). *Have they made thee ruler? Be not lifted up: be among them as one of them* (Ecclus. xxxii. 1).

This gentleness should lead him to be affable and easy of access, so that none of his community should ever be afraid of speaking confidently to him about his needs. He should be patient in listening to them, ready kindly to satisfy them, instructing them with care and zealously exhorting them. Let him aim at being loved rather than feared, and there will result a much more ready obedience. The obedience of love is free, whereas that of fear is forced ; and the freer obedience is, the more sublime its merit. Consequently, since the business of every superior is to lead forward towards eternal life those committed to his charge, he should facilitate for them, as much as may be, the acquisition of the merit of a virtuous life.

Let him also be humble in the use of this world's goods, having nothing showy about him or a pompous manner, but let everything about him bear witness to a willing love of poverty and humility, his clothes and books, his cell and bed and bed-clothes, his table and its appurtenances, and such like : in all these let there be no fancy work, and nothing worldly ; and let him not tolerate such things in others. Like follows like, and so the worldly

wish for things on a grand scale, and the humble are content with what is plain. Seeking after what is fanciful is not a mark of the humble of heart ; much less, the love of things of value, or attempts at the magnificent : *He beholdeth every high thing, he is king over all the children of pride* (Job xli. 25).

As for *uprightness of Judgment*, it should show itself particularly in three ways. He should not be loose in his manner, indulging in unseemly talk, or a retailer of scurrilous anecdotes. These may at times be quite amusing, and go down well, but men soon cease to have reverence or respect for such as indulge in them. "His advice," says St. Gregory (Bk. I : Hom. in Ezech. Hom. 3 : n. 4) "is not readily hearkened to, whose manners are frivolous." For though, in the main, a superior should be regarded with affection, still the unruly should fear him ; and in fact love is all the sweeter when mingled with respect. Our love of the Supreme Master makes this clear, for the more we acknowledge the sublimity of His sovereign power, the more do we love the sweetness of His condescension : *The Lord*

is sweet and righteous : therefore he will give a law to sinners in the way (Psalm 24 : 8).

Then, also, he should be careful about his personal feelings, allowing himself no obvious partiality towards women or any fickle persons. True, those who love God more are to be preferred to such as love Him less, still all, in the common hope of salvation, are to be embraced in Christ. In practice his exterior manner should be such towards all, that none may have reason to think himself less valued than others, but all should be able to presume on a real personal love, and be able to approach him with confidence as they would a friend of their own choosing. Otherwise, nothing but envy and indignation will arise, as we see in the case of Joseph, whose brothers hated him precisely on account of their father's marked preference (cf. Gen. xxxvii.).

Lastly, he must not be a man of moods, inconstant and of uncertain temper, wanting one thing one moment and quite the contrary the next, without any good reason. For how can anyone rely on his judgment or accede to his wishes, if both are known to be unstable? His community can neither respect his prudence nor acknowledge themselves ready to

obey his decisions, and far from slight must needs be the resulting evil : *Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good* (i Thess. v. 21) : *And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations* (Philipp. ii. 14). However, to alter anything, whether material or spiritual, if there be good reason to do so, is not inconstancy but ordinary common sense. Just as it is foolish to change things for the worse, so it is mere narrow obstinacy to cling so pertinaciously to one's own ideas as to refuse to deviate from them despite an obvious advantage : *Neither must you think, if we command different things, that it cometh of the levity of our mind, but that we give sentence according to the quality and necessity of times, as the profit of the commonwealth requireth* (Esther xvi. 9). Thus also the Apostle assures the Corinthians that his promise of visiting them, though as yet unfulfilled, had not been made in a moment of thoughtlessness, but seriously and for their own advantage (cf. ii Cor. i.).

As the judge of the people is himself, so also are his ministers : and what manner of man the ruler of a city is, such also are they that dwell therein (Ecclus. x. 2). Good masters,

as a general rule, make good disciples. Many priests and religious would be far better men, if a better example was given by those set over to guide them. Very strict will be the account demanded at the Judgment Day from those who have rendered themselves culpable in this matter : *Behold, I myself come upon the shepherds ; I will require my flock at their hand* (Ezech. xxxiv. 10). Exhortation without example is like cement without lime, dry and useless : *Say to them that daub without tempering, that it shall fall* (Ezech. xiii. 11). From good manuscripts correct copies may be made, but if the originals are corrupt, so too will the copies be. Let them cling then more tenaciously to the apostolate of *life* than to the apostolate of *speech*, "for where a man's life is despised" says St. Gregory (I : Homil. in Evang. Homil. 12 : n. 1) "there will his teaching also be rejected." A superior should aim principally at this, making those entrusted to his care Christ-like, i.e. imbuing them with Christ's teaching and mode of life, so that they may not merely meditate upon Him in their hearts, but imitate Him in their ways : *Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children* (Eph. v. 1) : *My little children of whom I am in*

labour again, until Christ be formed in you (Gal. iv. 19). But, since the lessons of Christ's life cannot be really assimilated by means of teaching alone, superiors should try to vision forth in their own lives a living model of Him, so that it may be all the more profoundly imprinted on others: *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ* (i Cor. xi. 1) says St. Paul, which is as much as to say—If you desire to know, that you may imitate Him, what sort of man was Christ, behold the exemplar here in my own manner of life: *and I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me* (Gal. ii. 20). Christ's vicar should act for Christ, in promoting His good pleasure, in maintaining His authority and representing His person, furthering in his community the accomplishment of God's will, with God's authority promoting what is expedient, and showing himself throughout in life and manner a fit object of imitation: *For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord: and ourselves your servants through Jesus* (ii Cor. iv. 5). He preaches not Christ but himself, who, in speech, seeks his own glory, and who, by his bad example, offers *himself* to his subjects for their imitation, rather than Christ: *They are zealous in your regard, not*

well: but they would exclude you, that you might be zealous for them (Gal. iv. 17): i.e. they rule with no righteous zeal who, by their bad example, exclude you from following Christ, that you may fall in with their own ways and follow their example.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIFTH WING : ON CIRCUMSPECT DISCRETION

THE fifth wing or quality for a religious superior is a circumspect discretion and a broad grasp of his duties. How necessary this is for a ruler of souls Solomon makes clear to us, for we read how when God gave him an opportunity of asking for anything he might wish, he set everything else aside, and asked for "wisdom," declaring good rule to be impossible without it : *Give therefore to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, and discern between good and evil* (iii Kings iii. 9) : *To you, therefore, O kings, are these my words, that you may learn wisdom and not fall from it* (Wis. vi. 10) : *And now, O ye kings, understand : receive instruction, you that judge the earth* (Ps. 2 : 10). The superior is the leader of the flock entrusted to him, and should he go astray, the flock too will perish, dispersed and undone. As

the eye is the light of the entire body, so is a superior for those committed to him : *You are the light of the world* (Math. v. 14). According as the eye sees well or dimly, so is the body led by straight ways or devious.

Then, circumspection is not merely necessary in a superior that he may understand *what* has got to be done, but also that he may know *how* to set about it, for a good thing is far from being wholly good, unless done in the right way. St. Bernard says " Take discretion away, and virtue becomes vice " (Sermon 49 : in Cant. : n. 5). Without it, zeal overreaches itself : *They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge* (Rom. x. 2) : kindness turns into weakness under guise of compassion : *He that spareth the rod hateth his son* (Prov. xiii. 24) : i.e. failure to correct a sinner, on grounds of not upsetting him, hastens on his soul to perdition : patience turns into neglect if, under guise of humility, there be failure to check the unruly : *Roboam was unexperienced and of a fearful heart, and could not resist them* (ii Paralip. xiii. 7), those, that is, who had opposed themselves to God and himself : finally, good example itself loses all its constructive value unless coupled with discretion, like food which, however

good it may be, is insipid without salt : *In all thy oblations thou shalt offer salt* (Levit. ii. 13) : St. Paul speaks of *your reasonable service* (Rom. xii. 1), and we read in *Genesis* : *If thou offerest rightly, but dost not rightly divide, thou hast sinned* (Gen. iv. 7—*Septuagint version*), that is, it is not enough to do good unless time, place, manner and motive are all carefully taken into account.

Although there are quite a number of things—too many even to enumerate—about which a superior should be solicitous—still four stand out prominently as demanding particular vigilance. In the *Book of Exodus* (ch. xxviii) we read how the High Priest, as he entered the sanctuary to minister to the Lord, was bidden, besides other ornaments, to bear on his breast the *Rational of Judgment*, containing four rows of gems and in each row three precious stones encased in gold. A superior, in undertaking the care of souls, enters thereby into the sanctuary as God's ministering priest, for, in furthering men's eternal salvation, he offers to God a most pleasing service, for no sacrifice is more pleasing to God than zeal for souls. He too, then, should be constantly alive to four very special questions, to which, among many

others, he should very often give the reasoned attention of his mind. The first is, how to govern fittingly those committed to him that the good may persevere and advance: the second, how to correct the unobservant and lax and lead them forward to better things: the third, how to deal suitably with such exterior business as may demand his attention; and the fourth, how to maintain himself and regulate carefully his own conduct throughout. To each of these four questions—as to each of the four rows of gems—there belong three special points to note.

Now, concerning *fitting government*, it is most necessary for a superior to be on really intimate terms with all the members of his community, and acquainted with their character, habits and strength, in order that he may be able to apportion suitably to each one the onus of observance. It is clear that all are not alike: *Everyone hath his proper gift from God: one after this manner and another after that* (i Cor. vii. 7): *Aaron and his sons shall go in, and they shall appoint every man his work, and shall divide the burdens that every man is to carry* (Num. iv. 19). Aaron and his sons correspond to Provincial and Local

Superiors who ought to *go in*, i.e. know all about their subjects, apportioning to each one such duties of religious observance as may seem fitting, according to the following three-fold nature of observance, symbolized by the three precious stones in the first of the four above-mentioned sets of gems.

The first kind of observance centres round such things—according to the form of Profession made and as embodied in the Rules of different Orders—as are necessary for salvation and of which any deliberate transgression is a mortal sin. Such are the vows of voluntary poverty, chastity and obedience, and any other precepts which may be enjoined *sub gravi*. In these there can be no question of a dispensation, for the superior himself is as bound thereto as his subjects. Vigilantly, then, must a superior attend to these, for he is obliged to have them studiously observed by all, and must, if need be, bring pressure to bear on the unwilling. As far as is in his power, he must tolerate transgression in none, even though he were to expose himself and his brethren to grave vexation and loss in so doing: *Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecu-*

tion, or the sword? (Rom. viii. 35) : let this be far from us, implies St. Paul. Here we are combating those who are for ever urging that unless this and that be immediately acquired for the Brethren, life will be made quite insupportable for them. Such a manner of complaining is indeed quite contrary to our Rule, besides leading to scandal and sullyng the religious life. In fact, a country is better without religious at all, if they cannot or will not live therein as religious, for then there is no fear of their either perishing themselves or giving scandal to others : *He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea* (Math. xviii. 6). What, then, of those who scandalize many and such as are not children ?

So much, then, for the very first stone, most vital of all and in the maintenance of which a superior should chiefly shine.

The second kind of observance centres round such things as belong to the exercise of a loftier perfection, e.g. patience beyond the ordinary, a wholly admirable humility, a wonderful charity, an austere sobriety, deep poverty, a sublime devotion and similar virtues.

A superior, by exhortation, warning and efficacious example, should interest his subjects in such things, drawing them forward gently rather than constraining the unwilling. The counsels of perfection are, indeed, matters for exhortation, not command, except in so far as, like Chastity, they are embodied in the vows. The main purpose of religious life is to furnish a practical school of perfection, somewhat after the manner of the old Roman *palæstra*. The latter, as we know, was a school of wrestling where the combatants stripped themselves, and then anointed their bodies with oil, so as to offer no grip to their adversaries who might otherwise pin them to earth—an apt simile of the religious endeavour: *Everyone that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things* (i Cor. ix. 25). A superior, then, should spread this spirit abroad, guiding his subjects, and inspiring them not merely to tread the path of salvation, but to tend towards perfection and the winning of great glory in heaven.

The third kind of observance centres round those things which are neither, on the one hand, absolutely necessary for salvation nor yet, on the other, essentially bound up with eminent holiness, but which have nevertheless

been laid down by the holy fathers as conducive to and safeguarding both, and as providing an exercise in good works, maintaining the orderly beauty of religious life, and edifying all who behold them. Such are fasting, silence, fitting solemnity in the Divine Office and liturgical services, and certain suitable external work. These, as the Apostle intimates to Timothy (i Tim. iv. 8), are not wholly without value. They are useful after the manner of implements to an artificer, in the handling of which one grows more skilful in course of time ; and of course the *end* exists prior to and independent of the *means*. In all these matters, where necessity or some greater good demands it, the prudent superior dispenses without difficulty, according to times and places, as may seem expedient. Where, however, there is neither clear utility nor need, he should zealously watch over their observance. In reality no slight discretion is required herein for a superior that he may hold to a middle course between remissness and rigour. For if he is excessively hard, and there is, in consequence, no bond of affection between his community and himself, there will be no goodwill on their part making for the observance of other yet more useful and

necessary things. Of course, if he is, on the other hand, unduly remiss, then does the way lie open to disaster deeper still: *He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little* (Ecclus. xix. 1).

We now come to the second question, *the correction of faults*. Here, too, should a superior's discretion be very much in evidence. This corresponds to our second row of gems; and, as before, we find a threefold division, there being three kinds of delinquents, and the requisite exercise of discretion will vary accordingly.

Firstly, there are those who, when they have fallen into any fault, straightway, either moved interiorly by grace or exteriorly admonished by man, fly to the remedy of penance. To these the spiritual physician should apply such remedies as, though not without *satisfactory* value, are nevertheless so tempered with the soothing fomentations of clemency, that, whilst affording satisfaction to God for the offence committed, and to the community for the scandal given—that the rest may more than ever fear to sin—still are light enough not to make the delinquent regret that he ever submitted himself to penance at all: *if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are*

spiritual—understand hereby “superiors”—*instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted* (Gal. vi. 1): i.e. impose such a penance as may bring home to the man the gravity of his offence, but temper it with such compassionate clemency as you would wish yourself to experience, should you have fallen into a similar fault. So much for the *first* stone of our second row.

Others, when they fall, conceal, palliate, defend their action, and the poison lies hid within. The superior may guess, from certain signs, that putrid matter is gathering there, but it does not show itself sufficiently on the surface—either by evident testimony or free confession—as to justify him in applying the dissecting knife of open correction. Should he do so, nothing is gained, and he comes to be looked on rather as making trouble than as correcting vice. If, despite his feelings, he pretends to see nothing, then is he inwardly consumed with anxiety, both for his brother's soul and for his own, in that he fails to correct him. However, since there really is nothing to be done, he must just appear to see nothing and exercise patience; and what he cannot get by an open conviction, try to obtain by

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prayer, that God Himself may in due time correct the delinquent, or so open his eyes to the evil of his ways that some kind of remedy may be made possible. Thus did our Lord for many a long day bear silently with the traitor Judas, and not till the inward evil had grown so great as to be visible to others did He openly correct him. As long as it lay hid, though in itself deadly, it was harming none and might in consequence, without fault, be in silence tolerated : *suffer both to grow*, i.e. the wheat and the cockle, *until the harvest* (Math. xiii. 30) : *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still* (Apoc. xxii. 11). Still, as far as possible, they should be cautioned about occasions of sin, and admonished in a general sort of way, if by any chance they may come to think better of their manner of life, for *Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed* (Math. xxvi. 24). Clearly Judas could not have fallen suddenly into so great a crime, but must for a long time previously have been gradually declining. For a long time, then, must Our Lord have been tolerating him in such an evil state : *I am silent and as one that seeth not* (Isaias lvii. 11). Dissimulation, such as this, requires the greatest discretion on a superior's part, that he deviate in nothing

from the straight path of justice. So much for the *second* gem of our second row.

A third type are those who offend grievously and openly, and either refuse the correction their conduct demands or merely pretend to receive it, with no intention, however, of amendment. Others, as a result, will deteriorate also, and, though scandalized at first, will begin to imitate those whom they see transgressing with impunity, and will demand for themselves a like immunity from correction. Wherever, then, the four following conditions are present—grave matter, publicity, no prospect of amendment, in face of obstinacy or an inveterate bad habit, and lastly, evil influence among others and scandal at such things being tolerated—what remains to be done but to cast out from the fold the plague-carrying lamb, to cut off the rotting limb, lest the disease spread and the strong grow weak : *I would they were even cut off, who trouble you* (Gal. v. 12) : *Put away the evil one from among yourselves* (i Cor. v. 13) : *If the unbeliever depart, let him depart* (i Cor. vii. 15) : *Cut it down therefore—the unfruitful fig-tree—why cumbereth it the ground?* (Luke xiii. 7). *Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down* (Math. iii. 10) : *Command the*

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children of Israel, that they cast out of the camp every leper . . . lest they defile it when I shall dwell with you (Num. v. 2, 3).

In these matters, however, nothing should be done impetuously, on the spur of the moment, but only after mature deliberation with prudent and spiritual men, endowed with the gift of Counsel : *My son, do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou has done* (Ecclus. xxxii. 24) : *He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea* (Math. xviii. 6) ; that is, it is better that the religious, who is scandalizing rather than edifying ordinary people, should be cast out and thus individually suffer, rather than that, through him, the religious life itself fall into disrepute.

We now come to the third question, that which concerns the *exterior business* to be dealt with by a superior. The three points, to be noted herein, touch on those matters which a superior should entrust to others, those which he should dispose of himself, and lastly those which, as far as may be, he should cut out and get rid of altogether. Thus Christ left certain things to the charge of His disciples

—as the money matters to Judas—confining Himself to the work of preaching and healing, and, when asked to settle about an inheritance disputed of between two brothers, replied : *Man, who hath appointed me judge or divider over you ?* (Luke xii. 14).

As for those matters which a superior should entrust to others, it is clear that if he means to retain exclusive control of *all* exterior and temporal concerns, he will not be able to provide as he ought for the more valuable interior needs of his community. His attention will be so much taken up here, there and everywhere as to leave little room for attending to the more vital needs of souls : *Be thou to the people in those things that pertain to God . . . that so it may be lighter for thee, the burden being shared out unto others* (Exod. xviii. 19 and 22) : *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables* (Acts vi. 2). If there are none to whom he may well commit these exterior things, then it is really preferable for a superior to run the risk of being somewhat imposed upon in financial matters, rather than to allow himself to be wholly immersed in them. Christ knew Judas to be dishonest, yet still left him in his office of purveyor : *He was a thief, and having the purse,*

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carried the things that were put therein (John xii. 6). This should be remembered by those who seem to have no difficulty in finding others to whom to entrust their spiritual duties, but who seldom let money matters out of their own hands. And yet to imperil souls is an incomparably greater mischief than to lose money.

Every superior, or guardian of souls, should make of spiritual things his principal care—such things as are necessary for salvation or which make for progress in virtue—for these belong to the very essence of the pastoral office, and of such matters principally will he have to render account at the Judgment Seat of God. Under this head comes the observance of the Rule and Statutes of the Order, and of the discipline of religious life, and also the maintenance of peace and fraternal charity among the Brethren. Hence a superior should be intimately acquainted with all of his subjects, that he may guide them in times of uncertainty, provide against and ward off from them occasions of sin, admonish them that they may advance, correct where correction is necessary, solve their difficulties and in general help them all to perform the duties of their charge in such manner as to be of service to others without sullyng their own conscience.

When, however, he cannot satisfy men without offending God, let him remain in obedience to God, and, as for men, reconcile himself to much patience : *We ought to obey God, rather than men* (Acts v. 29). The brotherhood is like the human body, of which the superior is the head, for whilst the members are busy over their respective functions, the head presides over and provides for all. He corresponds to the *central sense*, regulating and co-ordinating the activity of the others, and—on the lines of the nervous system—transmits motion throughout by means of the commands and concessions of holy obedience. The head is not confined to any single function, in order that it may be free to attend to the needs of all the members. It influences all, and without it there could be no hearing or smell, no taste or speech. Such is a superior's position in the midst of his community : *They watch as being to render an account of your souls* (Heb. xiii. 17).

As for superfluous kinds of business, and such as are neither necessary for salvation nor adapted to the advancement of souls, these a superior should remove, as much as he opportunely may, both from himself and from the Brethren. So short is our day and so evil,

that we barely suffice for what is necessary ; if then we begin to busy ourselves with superfluous and alien interests, we shall certainly neglect things better and more useful ; for a mind caught up by many distracting cares is all the less capable of dealing adequately with each thing singly. Hence, when superiors and their religious are too much entangled in exterior occupations, busy about their houses or books or law-suits and similar matters, better not meddled with at all, it sometimes happens not merely that they neglect higher things, but even—and not seldom—actually defile their conscience. From constant intercourse with the world, a darkness settles over the mind, shutting it off from the contemplation of divine truths, and a chillness steals over the heart, quenching all longing for the things of God. Just as from a wound noxious humours arise which, if not carefully removed, give rise to tumours and ulcers, so too those who willingly allow themselves to be immersed in *affairs* will find these so developing as quite to extinguish the interior life. A superior consequently needs discretion that he may be able to foresee possible eventualities, and carefully to consider how far he will allow himself to be implicated and in what manner

to conduct himself therein : *My son, meddle not with many matters* (Ecclus. xi. 10). He who bears a load already heavy enough is unwise to burden himself yet more with what he may well dispense with.

We now come to the fourth and last question which concerns the superior himself. Above all things it is to himself he should look, lest providing for others he neglect himself, saving others, dangerously involve himself : *For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul ?* (Math. xvi. 26). This is symbolized by the fourth row of gems, and, corresponding as before to its three precious stones, we find herein a threefold circumspection to be noted : *Look to yourselves, that you lose not the things which you have wrought, viz. in others : but that you may receive a full reward* (ii John 8).

The first degree of circumspection centres round that peace of soul which comes of always acting conscientiously and with a pure intention. The former condition is present where a superior wishes for nothing, does nothing, orders or tolerates nothing which is unlawful or unbecoming, or in any manner

unworthy of the religious profession or from which sin or scandal might arise. The latter condition, where a superior, in all the good he does himself or encourages in others, seeks after no glory from men, nor consequent immoderate pleasure to himself, but in all things aims solely at the good pleasure of God, so that what he does in God's stead, and as God's vicar, he may also do with a pure intention for God's sake and love: *If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be light-some* (Math. vi. 22): i.e. if his intention is rightly directed in charity, then the whole body of his work will be worthy of the reward of light eternal: *but if thy eye be evil!* Let him then scrutinize his conscience, weighing solicitously what he has done, what he ought to have done and may have omitted, and what was his intention throughout. As for the evil he may have done, let him be sorry for it and confess it, correct himself and beware; and as for the good, let him glory not in himself, but in God: *if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged* (i Cor. xi. 31). He who wipes off the dust from others can hardly escape it himself, but must needs brush himself also: *Physician, heal thyself* (Luke vi. 23). Let his success be indeed in

him matter for joy, but not for self-conceit, considering how it is not for his own sake, but for the sake of those whose superior he is, that God has given him grace to act and speak wisely or to decide as is fitting.

The second degree of circumspection turns on his exterior manner and words, in which again he must ever seek to be of service to others, rather than to himself. For he who is set to live as an example to many, to satisfy each singly, and yet to please all in general, has need of much discretion to maintain a just mean, that he may not be too solemn nor too frivolous, not too severe nor too easy going, not too sociable nor too exclusive, not too taciturn nor too talkative, not too stern of speech nor too effeminate, not too narrow of outlook nor too broad, not too much a *parlour* man nor too little, not too fond of good cheer nor too inclined to stint, not too close an observer of the ways of the Brethren nor too unseeing, not too considerate towards some and indifferent to others, and the like. However, since it really is not possible to please everyone, it is advisable to err rather on the side of kindness, winning for himself the affection of his subjects, who will in con-



sequence fall in more easily with his suggestions, have recourse more confidently to him in their needs, and more readily imitate him. His position alone should be enough to ensure for him all necessary respect: to add thereto an austere severity is only to make himself "impossible" as far as ordinarily diffident people are concerned: *You ruled over them with rigour, and with a high hand, and my sheep were scattered* (Ezech. xxxiv. 4, 5): *Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household* (Ecclus. iv. 35).

Thus did the Chief of Pastors Himself, the Lord Jesus, show us so kindly a charity that we might grow to love and imitate Him, and that loving Him as Man we might be led on to love and know Him as God *ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur*, as we sing in the Christmas Preface. So also should a superior, as the Vicar of Christ, aim very principally at winning the affection of his community, that he may the easier lead them forward to the love of Christ. In all uncertainty, however, let him incline to what he truly judges to be more consonant with the virtues of charity and humility, with the purity of his profession and the perfection of the Gospel teaching.

Finally, there remains that discretion, necessary for the right ordering of all the rest, whereby a superior looks to himself, that it be not with him as with the eye of the body which sees everything but itself. This consists in not being *more wise than it behoveth to be wise* (Rom. xii. 3), not believing in himself more than is fitting, or being unduly self-opinionated, for as the blessed Gregory says, "As it is a temptation for subjects to blame their superiors for in many ways not acting wisely, so is it a temptation for superiors to fancy themselves wiser than other men" (Lib. Moral. xxxiv. c. 23 : n. 50) : *Hast thou seen a man wise in his own conceit? There shall be more hope of a fool than of him* (Prov. xxvi. 12), for provided a man, however inept he may possibly be, is only aware of his limitations, then there is no fear of his being deceived, for he will not trust himself, but will take counsel of experts. The person, however, who unwarrantably presumes on himself, often deceives himself into imagining that his ruling must be right, even there, where it is patently wrong.

In fact, this undue self-reliance would seem to be for everyone the most dangerous of temptations. Yet no one is so wonder-

fully intelligent as never to be deceived about anything, so that he who thinks his own opinion must always be the one and only right one is simply paving the path of entry for that astute adversary who knows so well how to cloak falsehood under a seductive appearance of good: *He sitteth in ambush with the rich in private places, that he may kill the innocent* (Psalm 9:28); that is, he lies in wait all the more eagerly where he perceives a case in which great merit may be won, seeking out and slaying the unwary precisely when the latter was imagining himself about to render some great service to God. Hence let a superior be careful to listen to advice very readily and humbly to ask for it.

Threefold is the utility of so acting. Firstly, where others agree with him, he is all the less likely to be deceived. Secondly, should anything he do turn out faulty, less blame attaches to him than it would have done had he acted on his own responsibility alone. Lastly, his very humility in seeking advice will often win for him from God, either personally or through another, a discernment hitherto wanting. Thus even Moses, with whom God was wont to speak *face to face*, willingly accepted and followed the advice of

Jethro, his father-in-law (cf. Exodus xxxiii. 11; and xviii.). Similarly the apostle Paul, filled though he was with the spirit of God and preaching a gospel learnt by direct revelation from Jesus Christ, still, obedient always to the same inspiration, went up to Jerusalem and conferred with his fellow apostles Peter and John and James, in order that, being in conformity with *their* teaching, he might be all the more secure in his own (cf. Gal. ii.). Such was the example of seeking counsel that he has left to all faithful superiors: *do thou nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done* (Ecclus. xxxii. 24).

Some, on entering upon office as superiors, imagine themselves to have acquired thereby so exclusive a monopoly of common sense as to warrant a wholesale condemnation of all their predecessors' doings, on the grounds that they were wholly mistaken, and even quite wrong. Others again, on vacating office, are loud in condemning all their successors do, forgetting that just as they make little of others' efforts, so may others possibly make little of theirs: *Woe to thee . . . that despisest, shalt not thyself also be despised?* (Isaias xxxiii. 1). No man's actions are more

closely scrutinized than are those of one accustomed himself to condemn severely the actions of others, for it may be he will sometime or other be discovered at fault precisely there where he has often found fault with others.

It remains to note that there are two classes of men whose advice a prudent superior will be chary of following—flatterers and tale-bearers. The former would deceive him that he may come to over-estimate his own powers: *they that call thee blessed, the same deceive thee, and destroy the way of thy steps* (Isaias iii. 12), by preventing him from humbly conceiving a right estimate of his own discernment. The latter lead him to suspect others of being worse than they really are, and often to go so far as to condemn the guiltless before getting at the real facts: *with crafty fraud they deceive the ears of princes that are well-meaning, and judge of others by their own nature; the good designs of kings are depraved by the evil suggestions of certain men; and they endeavour to undermine by lies such as observe diligently the offices committed to them and do all things in such manner as to be worthy of all men's praise* (Esther xvi. 6, 7, 5).

Since, however, advice is usually required

for one's own guidance, to acquire certainty where one was previously in doubt, or to strengthen one's authority, by acting with the concurrence of others, or finally for the sake of peace, that none may have reason to murmur, counsel should rather be taken in the first instance with the more prudent, in the second with the more prominent, and in the last with those directly concerned in the matter in hand. However, since cases requiring discretion are quite without number, no certain and universally applicable rule can possibly be laid down.

CHAPTER VII

THE SIXTH WING: ON DEVOTION TO THE THINGS OF GOD

THE sixth and last wing is devotion to the things of God. It is the most necessary of all, for without it the others can never be reached. Thus zeal for justice is enkindled by it, compassionate devotion infused, patience made strong, an exemplary tradition built up and, finally, a clear-sighted discretion assured. This is indeed the *unction of the Spirit* of which St. John speaks, guiding us in all things necessary for salvation: *as for you, let the unction which you have received from him abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you; but as his unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie* (i John ii. 27).

Devotion guides us to pursue the better course; *will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind* (John xiv. 26).

It urges us to strive after what is good; *they*

that eat me shall yet hunger, and they that drink me shall yet thirst (Ecclus. xxiv. 29).

It strengthens us in the accomplishment of duty ; *for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will (Philipp. ii. 13).*

It makes us hate sin ; *I have hated and abhorred iniquity (Ps. 118 : 163) : the book . . . was in my mouth sweet as honey, and when I had eaten it my belly was bitter (Apoc. x. 10).*

It orders our life virtuously ; *he brought me into the cellar of wine, he set in order charity in me (Cant. ii. 4).*

It composes our exterior manner and words ; *never have I joined myself with them that play, neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness (Tob. iii. 17).*

It makes sweet the study of the truths of faith ; *for the wisdom (sapientia) of doctrine is according to her name (Ecclus. vi. 23), i.e. makes such study sapid or tasty.*

It raises hope into confidence ; *for the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God (Rom. viii. 16).*

It enkindles the love of God ; *the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us (Rom. v. 5).*

It makes of us God's familiar friends ; *and*

the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man is wont to speak to his friend (Exod. xxxiii. 11).

It gives us confidence of winning what we seek ; *we have confidence towards God : and whatsoever we shall ask, we shall receive of him (i John iii. 21, 22).*

It vitalizes prayer ; *may thy whole burnt offerings be made fat (Ps. 19 : 4).*

It makes us generous and kind ; *the spirit of understanding is . . . sweet . . . gentle, kind (cf. Wisdom vii. 22, 23).*

It humbles the heart ; *to whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little ? (Isaias lxvi. 2).¹*

It makes us constant in adversity ; *the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear ? (Ps. 26 : 1). Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ ? (Rom. viii. 35).*

It brings pleasure into every good work ; *her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness, but joy and gladness (Wisdom viii. 16).*

It raises the mind towards spiritual things ; *if he turn his heart to him, he shall draw his spirit and breath unto himself (Job xxxiv. 14).*

¹ I here omit the phrase *Oleum spiritum premit in olla fervente*, which has apparent reference to the preceding text from Isaias, which St. Bonaventure quotes thus : *Super quem requiescet spiritus meus nisi super humilem.*—Tr.

It makes the world seem paltry ; *I have seen all things that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity* (Eccles. i. 14).

It draws us forward towards heavenly desires ; *I am straightened between two, having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ* (Philipp. i. 23).

It cleanses us from sin and satisfies for the punishment thereof ; *many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much* (Luke vii. 47).

It enriches us with merit ; *if riches be desired in life, what is richer than wisdom, which maketh all things ?* (Wisdom viii. 5).

It greatly edifies our neighbour ; *He chose him out of all men living to offer sacrifice to God, incense, and a good savour* (Ecclus. xlv. 20) ; *We are the good odour of Christ* (ii Cor. ii. 15).

It puts evil spirits to flight ; *the smoke thereof driveth away all kinds of devils* (Tob. vi. 8).

Finally it draws down near to us the angels and saints ; *Princes went before joined with singers* (Ps. 67 : 26) ; *when thou didst pray with tears . . . I offered thy prayer to the Lord* (Tob. xii. 12).

Such, and many besides, are the graces which devotion brings us. A ruler of souls

should then be very earnest in endeavouring to acquire what is calculated thus to guide him constantly, to strengthen him in the accomplishment of his duty and to keep him from devious paths. But not for himself only should he seek it, but for those also committed to his care, seeing that, without help from God, he suffices not of himself to guard them; *Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it* (Ps. 126 : 1). A superior is a mediator between God and his community. He stands in their midst doing *God's* work by teaching them, correcting them, and inspiring them with high ideals; but *their* interests with God he should also endeavour to promote faithfully by satisfying for them, obtaining grace for them and keeping them from evil: *I was the mediator and stood between the Lord and you* (Deut. v. 5).

Devotion is of three kinds: "Common" in so far as community exercises are concerned; "special," attaching to private exercises of piety, and lastly "assiduous" in so far as it should be as the very atmosphere in which we live.

As for the first, we shall consider it in special reference to the Divine Office, and we may note immediately that devotion should be

diligently directed to three points. Firstly, it should see that everything be done in an orderly fashion without confusion, mistakes or hesitation, each religious carefully carrying out such portions as may be entrusted to him : *Let all things be done decently and according to order* (i Cor. xiv. 40) : *David and the chief officers of the army separated for the ministry the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Idithun, to prophesy with harps and with psalteries and with cymbals according to their number, serving in their appointed office* (i Paralip. xxv. 1). Secondly, it should see that the work of God—which the Divine Office most certainly is—be done strenuously, not in bored fashion nor slothfully : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully* (Jerem. xlvi. 10). Lastly, it should see that the Divine Office be carried on devoutly and reverently, without laughter or disturbance, distinctly and with attention, as is seemly in Angels' company and God's presence : *with the whole heart and mouth praise ye him and bless the name of the Lord* (Ecclus. xxxix. 41).

The Church, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has established the Divine Office for five reasons.

Firstly, in imitation of the heavenly choirs

where the Saints and Angels in God's presence are ever intent upon His praises : *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord : they shall praise thee for ever and ever* (Ps. 83 : 5). Moreover, since—according to His promise, *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world* (Math. xxviii. 20)—Christ deigns to be truly with us here, both sacramentally and spiritually, it is only right that we should show Him, as best we may, something of reverential honour and praise, after the heavenly model set us from above ; and, although not continuously, as do those celestial cantors, still from time to time, according as our weakness will allow, let us stand before Him with willing psalmody, imitating that Jerusalem which is above, *which is our mother* (Gal. iv. 26).

Secondly, that mindful of the benefits of God we might at stated times in prayer and praise regularly render thanks to Him, Who by night was born of the Virgin Mary, and in the morning, with suffering ahead, stood before the Judge ; Who rose in the early dawn, and was scourged at the third hour—when also He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles ;—Who was crucified at the sixth hour, and died for us on the Cross at the ninth ; Who, supping

at eventide, gave us the Sacraments of his Body and Blood, and Who was buried at the close of day. Then the celebration of Mass not only calls back to us the ever-to-be-remembered Mystery of His Passion, but brings to us the grace of His very presence, and in sacramental form does He therein nourish us with Himself. As it is right then that these things should never fall into oblivion, so it is fitting at fixed times regularly to recall them : *I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord hath bestowed upon us* (Isaias lxiii. 7).

Thirdly, that we may assiduously maintain devotion in ourselves, and be constantly engaged in re-enkindling the flame of divine love lest, through sloth and alien cares, it die down : *This is the perpetual fire which shall never go out . . . and the priest shall feed it, putting wood on it every day in the morning* (cf. Levit. vi. 13, 12). The *fire* stands for the fervour of devotion, which should be for ever burning on the altar of the heart, and which a fervent priest should ever feed by laying thereon the *wood* of divine praise, lest at any time it be extinguished : *I will bless the Lord at all times* (Psalm 33 : 2).

Fourthly, that we may lead on to the

practice of prayer those good simple folk in the world who do not know of themselves what fixed times to choose for prayer, so that at least when the Divine Office is being chanted they too may gather in the Church to pray, and be all the less wearied in staying there by having before their eyes the clerics in choir: *all the multitude of the people was praying without, at the hour of incense* (Luke i. 10). Many unlettered people would hardly ever offer themselves to prayer, were they not accustomed at stated times to be regularly summoned from without to the Church for the celebration of the liturgy and the reading of the Word of God.

Fifthly, to maintain the splendour of the Christian religion, for it is suitable and becoming that if Jews and Pagans and even certain heretics assemble at times together and celebrate their profane ceremonies, and observe the rites of their "betrayal," much more should they, who hold the true and sacrosanct sacramental mysteries, often come together, both to celebrate and venerate them, and to offer to their Founder the solemn homage of their praise, whereby they may win a larger measure of God's grace and eternal life hereafter, and whereby simple

folk may be drawn to love and reverence our holy religion: *to the festivals he added beauty, and set in order the solemn times* (Ecclus. xlvii. 12).

Thus greater care should be given to the Divine Office than to any other exterior observance, and, as we have said, it should be carried out with dignity, diligence and devotion. At other times we work *for* God, but here we stand before Him and wait on Him, speak directly to Him, and He to us, and implore His help in our necessities.

The second kind of devotion we spoke of was "special." This lies in our private exercises of piety, in the recitation of our old familiar vocal prayers, psalms, litanies and such like, which each one, quietly pondering thereon, says to himself: *When you pray, say: Father . . .* (Luke xi. 2). Then also does it lie in the holy exercise of mental prayer, wherein each one gathers up before the eyes of his soul his own sins and miseries, and the punishment to come, or the mercies of God both general and special, and the Passion of Christ and His gentle goodness, and the rewards He has promised us, conceiving therefrom devout affections on the

fear of God, or of love and a great desire, or of grief or of spiritual joy: *I meditated in the night with my own heart* (Psalm 76 : 7). Then, lastly, is this "special" devotion found in pious aspirations towards God, and tears even and sighs, and the holy desires of love, and in other interior and ineffable movements of the heart, rising upwards to a veritable excess of rapturous jubilation and union of the soul with God, adhering wherein to God a man becomes *one spirit* with him (cf. i Cor. vi. 17) by a luminously clear intellectual knowledge of God, and a burning and tenacious love: ¹ *the spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings* (Rom. viii. 26).

Now if a superior, by reason of various distracting cares, is much hindered in his special devotion, let him at least from time to time, as opportunity offers, give himself, as it were

¹ Let me give the Latin of this admirable passage, for my English version is, alas, very inadequate. "Item, in piis erga Deum affectibus et lacrymis et suspiriis et sanctis desideriiis amoris et aliis internis et ineffabilibus motibus cordis, in jubilis, excessibus et raptu et absorptione spiritus in Deum, quo *adhærens Deo, unus fit spiritus cum eo* per puræ intelligentiæ lucem et cognitionem Dei et amoris ejus ardorem et glutinosam fruendi inhæSIONem; ad Romanos octavo: *Ipse enim Spiritus postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenerrabilibus.*"

furtively and by stealth, to the exercise of prayer, lest he grow wholly cold, lest he slip into a disuse of prayer, lest he draw away from God, and the grace of divine favour be then, though he note it not, withdrawn from him. Thus Moses, harassed without by the people's business, frequently had recourse to God in the Tabernacle of the Covenant, finding in that familiar intercourse, interior strength of soul. Our Lord also, after preaching to the crowds by day, spent solitary nights in prayer. Now although a superior have little leisure for prayer, seeing, however, it is his duty to pray for others, there is given him at times, for others' sake, a richer grace of prayer, contributing in secret to the success of his outward labours. Only let him not fail in seeking out opportunities, nor set such as are offered aside, lest for his heedlessness he come to be—and for good reason—far distant from God's gifts.

Finally, we come to the devotion spoken of as "assiduous." This should be ever present in a superior; nay more, it should be in every religious who *wishes* to advance in virtue. It is threefold.

Firstly, it lies in a continuous recollection of God kept ever before the eyes of the soul.

I set the Lord always in my sight (Psalm 15 : 8) : *My eyes are ever towards the Lord* (Psalm 24 : 15). Always and in every place should one endeavour to be intent on God, as in His acknowledged presence. Thus Elias and Eliseus were wont to say : *The Lord liveth in whose sight I stand* (iii Kings xvii. 1, xviii. 15 ; iv Kings iii. 14). Just as the angels, whithersoever they may be sent, withdraw not from the vision of God, so, similarly, a spiritual man should, as far as possible, never allow the memory of God to fade from within his heart. Should this happen at times, he should pull himself up, as St. Bernard used to do, saying, " Look on as lost all such time as is spent without thinking of God " (*Liber Medit.* c. 6 ; n. 18). Now, although one cannot be always deeply immersed in the thought of God, and meditating upon Him, still one should aim at keeping the recollection of Him at the back of one's mind ; and then, when opportunity offers, this mere memory of Him will take shape, so to speak, in meditation and prayer : somewhat after the fashion of a man who carries about with him the material for a statue, and then from time to time, as occasion serves, produces it and works on it a little.

Secondly, it lies in a continuous endeavour to please God in every word and work. As being always in His presence, a man should beware of what displeases Him, and grieve should he ever offend Him, and study in what and how he may please Him more : *We labour whether absent or present to please him. For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ* (ii Cor. v. 9, 10). A religious should always so order his life as if on the point of standing at the tribunal of the great Judge : *Be you then also ready : for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come* (Luke xii. 40). He sees all we do, and just as He forgets not our good works, but intends for them due and timely reward, so neither does He forget our evil deeds, but will exact punishment for such as have not been expiated by penance : *Who seeth me ? Darkness compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me : whom do I fear ? The most High will not remember my sins. And he understandeth not that his eye seeth all things* (Ecclus. xxiii. 25-27).

Thirdly, and lastly, devotion means to preface all we do with prayer—interior prayer at least—and to forearm ourselves by prayer against every vicissitude, and to follow up all

the benefits we receive with thanksgiving and the praise of God. A man should ask God to enlighten him as to what he ought to do, to direct all things to the issue most conducive to salvation, and ever to maintain and increase His benefits. As a sailor, who foresees a storm, hastens all the quicker to some sheltered harbour, so should a religious be ever turning for refuge to the harbour of prayer, securing himself therein against all dangerous encounters, and in all he does, trusting rather to prayer than to his own industry or labour : *As we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to thee* (ii Paralip. xx. 12) : *As the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters . . . so are our eyes unto the Lord our God* (Psalm 122 : 2).

EPILOGUE

A RELIGIOUS superior, then, as he stands by *the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated* (Isaias vi. 1), should be adorned certainly with these six wings or qualities—to say nothing of others—and of these let him raise the first two above his head, and with the next two let him cover his body and feet, and with the last two fly freely upwards.

Thus may his ZEAL be untrammelled by the stifling breath of human praise, and disentangled from compassionate carnal ties ; and may his true DEVOTEDNESS to the Brethren be carried boldly upwards by a right intention, having the heavenly reward in view : *I have inclined my heart to do Thy justifications for ever, for the reward* (Psalm 118 : 112).

Then, may PATIENCE and an EXEMPLARY LIFE shield him from wounding worries and the nakedness of meritless days, arming him for his own defence and clothing him as with a sacred vesture : *Put on thy strength, O Sion, put on the garments of thy glory* (Isaias lii. 1).

EPILOGUE

Finally, with CIRCUMSPECTION may he grasp in a broad flight of vision all he ought to strive after, and how ; and with earnest DEVOTION may he *seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God* (Col. iii. 1), approaching unto Him with sublime flight.

Now, although it cannot be that all who have charge of souls should be in equal measure possessed of these qualifications, still it is altogether necessary that no one be individually quite devoid of them, both for the fruitful edification of those he rules, as for his own proper salvation.

Moreover, every religious—who has at least himself to rule, and of this rule to render account to God, when the last reckoning comes—every religious should, each in his own measure, be adorned with these various qualifications or “wings,” and supernaturally raised up thereby. He should be zealous for good, compassionate for God’s sake towards his neighbour, patient under adversity ; he should edify others by good example, be circumspect in all things, and—of greater moment than anything else—he should by a life of familiar prayer cling closely to God

EPILOGUE

that He may protect him throughout, direct him and lead him onwards, and enable him to wing his flight unerringly towards Heaven. May Jesus Christ deign to grant this to us. Amen.

THE TWENTY-FIVE INJUNCTIONS

PROLOGUE

To Brother Peter,¹ his beloved in Christ—and to all who, having *put off the old man* (cf. Eph. iv. 22), strive to live with Christ and die to the world—from Brother Bonaventure, his brother in the Lord.

When, as we parted after our last meeting, you pressed me so earnestly, dear brother in the Lord, to visit you again as it were, by some little letters of spiritual advice, I felt at once, Brother, that in asking this of me, you *were heaping coals of fire upon my head* (cf. Prov. xxv. 22 : or Rom. xii. 20). Still so lovingly insistent were you in your demands, and yet so suppliantly humble, that you so far prevailed over my proud aloofness as to win from me a promise to do as you wished. It were, indeed, more fitting for me to receive of you, than to offer you of mine, but the

¹ It is uncertain who Peter was ; possibly the Peter known to have been Provincial Minister of Aquitaine.—*Tr.*

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insistence of your devotion has prevailed, and *I am become foolish* (ii Cor. xii. 11). As best I may, then, let me in some fashion make trial of what you urge me to ; not indeed writing anything new, but rather setting down such points as, simple and plain though they be, I have tried to gather together for my own use, and with most of which you will be familiar already.

But before going further, we must—and I appeal herein, *Carissime*, to your love—we must convince ourselves that, since no one, as unquestioned experience teaches, can perfectly serve God till he quite wholly sever himself from the world, so we too, would we follow the Lord, our Saviour, must hearken to the words of His prophet and *loose the bands of wickedness* and *undo the bundles that oppress* (Isaias lviii. 6), so that, being free from earthly occupations, we may with feet untrammelled follow the Redeemer ; for, as the Apostle bears witness : *No man being a soldier to God, entangleth himself with secular affairs* (ii Tim. ii. 4). Never, then, let us allow our heart to grow solicitous over any created thing, except in so far as it may help us the more earnestly to love God ; for the manifold variety of transient things, unduly

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pondered on, not merely distracts the soul and breaks in on the restful tranquillity of a peaceful mind, but also gives rise to all sorts of disquieting and agitating imaginations, and renders the mind continually uneasy. But rather let us set aside completely the heavy burden of earthly affections, and press unhampered forward towards Him who invites us, in Whom lies the soul's most real refreshment, and that supreme peace, *which surpasseth all understanding* (Philipp. iv. 7).

Come to me—He says—*all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (Math. xi. 28). O Lord, of whom dost Thou stand in need? Why dost Thou call? What bond twixt Thee and us? O truly compassionate words—*Come to me, and I will refresh you*. O wonderful condescension of our God! O ineffable charity! Whoever did the like? When was a like thing heard of or seen? (cf. Isaias lxvi. 8). *Come*, He says, *come to me, all, and learn of me; take up my yoke upon you and you shall find rest to your souls* (cf. Math. xi. 28, 29). O tenderest words, words most sweet, and of God most worthy; words *more piercing than any two-edged sword* (Heb. iv. 12), tearing at the heart-strings of men, overflowing with sweetness,

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reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit (ibid.). Arouse thyself, then, O Christian soul, before so gentle a love, so sweet a savour, so tender a perfume. Truly, he who perceives them not is sickly indeed, insensible even and nigh unto death. I beseech thee, O my soul, enkindle thy fervour, grow strong and grow rich, in the mercy of thy God, in the meekness of thy God, in the charity of thy Spouse. Glow with the passionate ardour of thy Beloved, grow strong in loving Him, rich in feasting on Him. Let no man hinder thee from entering, holding, tasting.

What seek we further, what are we to look for, what desire? In this One we have all good. But, alas! for our incredible folly, our lamentable weakness, our dreadful raving; for we are called to rest, and we pursue after labour; we are summoned to what may solace us, and we seek around for sorrow; we are promised joy and we crave for weeping. Miserable weakness, indeed, most miserable perversity! We are become as senseless things, lower even than mere carven images, having eyes, yet seeing not; ears, yet not hearing; reason, yet not discerning, holding *bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter* (Isaias v. 20).

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O God, how can we rectify such great perversity, how satisfy for so great an offence? Certainly, there are no latent tendencies thereto within us, but such as Thou hast placed there. Thou alone canst correct us, Thou alone satisfy for our sins, Thou Who alone *knowest our frame* (cf. Psalm 102:14), Who art our Salvation and our Redemption, and Who dost work only in those who, seeing the deep of their own misery, trust but in Thee as the One Who alone canst raise them up therefrom.

Since, then, he cares little to rise who knows not his proper state, let us lift up the eyes of our soul straight towards God, and see how prostrate we are lying now. Alive to our condition, let us lustily cry out to the Lord *from the depths* (Psalm 129:1), that He may stretch out towards us that helping hand of mercy *which can never be shortened that it cannot save* (Isaias lix. 1). Let us not, I beg, lose the *confidence which hath a great reward* (Heb. x. 35). *Let us go . . . with confidence to the throne of grace, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls* (Heb. iv. 16:i Pet. i. 9). Let there be no delaying amongst us, for Life is summoning us, Salvation awaits us, and our very anguish compels

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us to press on. What, then, are we doing? Why do we dally in sloth? Why do we plunge into entangling hindrances? *Let us hasten therefore to enter in that rest* (Heb. iv. 11) of eternal delight, where there are *great things and unsearchable and wonderful things without number* (Job v. 9). *Let Jerusalem, I beg you, come into your mind* (Jerem. li. 50). Let us sigh after our own country, stretch out our arms towards our mother (cf. Gal. iv. 26). Let us *enter into the powers of the Lord* (Psalm 70 : 16) ; let us gaze upon our gentle King reigning there, and may our hearts soften before His tender mercies.

Let us with our whole heart render thanks to Him, Who, taking no account of our ingratitude, draws not away from us the kindness of His mercy, but gives to us the desire to *run the way of His commandments* (Psalm 118 : 32), along which way, without the desire to, none can run. And this gift, indeed, is not to be weighed lightly, but rather highly esteemed, as one eminent among the prophets taught us when he declared his great desire, saying : *My soul hath longed to desire in every time thy justifications* (Psalm 118 : 20).

Since this very desire grows weak at times,

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owing to our heedless tepidity and neglect, I have then thought it fitting to set down here certain injunctions calculated to awaken it, in which are made clear some things we should avoid, and others we should follow. Noting these daily, and joining thereto an affectionate resolve, we may resume our early vigour, and grow up untiringly in the virtues and graces of divine charity, till at length there comes to us in its fulness the *Desire of the Eternal Hills* (Gen. xlix. 26).

And of these Injunctions eight are general ones, and the rest more special.

GENERAL INJUNCTIONS

Here, then, are certain well-established virtues, most profitable to beginners, real ladders of perfection, in the faithful use of which one may without any doubt ascend to the perfection of virtue and to the summit of heavenly glory ; to wit, firstly, a well-intentioned *unobtrusiveness* in all one's words and actions ; then to be *taciturn*, to be *prompt in obeying*, to be *instant in prayer*, to *confess one's faults frankly and often*, to *give ready service*, and lastly to *shun unprofitable society*. These are shining jewels, indeed, making the pos-

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essor thereof pleasing to God and to the Angels and to men. *But when it pleased him who separated you from your mother's womb, and called you by his grace, to reveal his Son in you* (cf. Gal. i. 15, 16), drawing you out from the miserable bondage of Egypt *into the liberty . . . of the children of God* (Rom. viii. 21), so that, as a *new man* (Eph. iv. 24), you began to step out along that way of humility that lies twixt fear and love ; so, as you ascend higher, but ever by this same path of humility, you may begin to practise yet nobler virtues, of which some are here set down.

THE TWENTY-FIVE SPECIAL INJUNCTIONS

(1) Above everything else it is necessary for you, would you follow in the Saviour's footsteps, to fix your hope wholly in the Lord, and not to look at all for any of this world's consolations.

(2) The Second is that you endeavour, as far as human weakness will allow, to cleanse yourself entirely from all vices and evil concupiscences, so that, having *purged out the old leaven, one wholly of malice and wickedness* (cf. i Cor. v. 7, 8), you may *walk in newness of life* (Rom. vi. 4) and so follow Christ ; for

unless you first sunder these bonds of iniquity, your soul will be weighed down with darkness and unable to rise towards heavenly things.

(3) The Third is, that you rid yourself of all binding attachments without, that you may be able to be bound in spirit wholly to the Lord.

(4) The Fourth is, that, out of love for the Most High, you bear with equanimity the persecutions of the world ; nay more, that accepting in desire *all* such persecutions, were it possible, you rejoice alone in the sufferings of Christ, and, refusing temporal joy, make merry in your very tribulations, regarding all as set ready for you, for the purgation of sin and the profit of your soul.

(5) The Fifth, that, knowing as you do, how you have offended your Creator and the Creator of all things, you demand not that any other creature should render account to you.

(6) The Sixth, that, being despicable in your own eyes and ready to be thought of as such by others, being also zealous for most holy Poverty, you aim at having everything about you, as far as possible, rough, cheap and sparing ; you should not, however, require this from others, but be rather openly

delighted at any little convenience your Brethren may secure, assisting them where necessary by attention and service, thinking them deserving of every consolation : unless of course—which God forbid—some sin against God become so evident to you in anyone as to leave no possibility of excuse ; in which case you should have compassion for such a one, and in your inmost heart, as much as you can, fear and grieve.

(7) The Seventh, that living always in fear, you do your very utmost to avoid, as the most deadly pests, the blandishments of this world, and honours and renown and favours and the whisperings of vain-glory ; and instead, stand ever on the alert, intent, suspicious of yourself : Ah ! if once you can gain perfect mastery over yourself, then no enemy without nor within can hurt you further.

(8) The Eighth, that, out of love for Him Who, being Lord of all things in Heaven, on earth and in Hell, still for our sakes took unto Himself the most lowly form of a slave, submitting Himself willingly therein to the power of men, you, too, should humble yourself, and holding all men to be your masters, and yourself, in very truth, to be the servant of all, act up to your belief in practice, in all

relations with your fellows. Thus will you win abiding tranquillity and peace with all, and have no rankling resentments whatever.

(9) The Ninth, that you touch none of those things which do not conduce to your own spiritual advantage ; this means that you do not busy yourself about anything, nor get involved at all in any way in anything within or without wherein you perceive no profit for your soul to lie, nor allow yourself to be by anyone implicated in such. There lies herein a most admirable truth ; but one quite unknown to those who never have made trial of it.

(10) The Tenth, that you set careful watch over your eyes and mouth and the other senses of the body, so that you seek not to see anything whatever, or hear or handle anything, but what may profit your soul. Very perfectly also should you restrain your tongue, not speaking unless questioned or constrained by evident necessity or utility, and then not in an overbearing manner but with fear and no bitterness, briefly and submissively if you can, always avoiding prolixity of speech, and cutting out, as best you may, all occasions thereof.

(11) The Eleventh, that seeking after that

solitude which is holy and rich in grace, you look on as invaluable the time you can give to watching, ever offering up your prayers therein to God, with attention to the words, great interior devotion and profound humility.

(12) The Twelfth, that when you come to recite the Divine Office, you draw in upon your soul such quiet that, unmindful of earthly things, with mind fixed intently on heavenly mysteries, you acquit yourself of it with such great alacrity, reverence, joy and fear as though, set in the ranks of the angels, you were with them offering praises face to face with God.

(13) The Thirteenth, that you hold ever in highest and most affectionate veneration the glorious Queen, Mother of our Lord, turning to her in all your pressing needs and difficulties as to a most sure refuge, imploring the help of her protection, choosing her as your advocate, whole-heartedly and without misgiving entrusting your cause to her who is the Mother of Mercy, and zealously offering her day by day most special marks of reverence. But that your devotion may be acceptable and your homage pleasing, you must endeavour to maintain within you as best you can, in soul and body, the spotlessness of her purity, and

try to your very utmost to walk in her footsteps, humbly and gently like her.

(14) The Fourteenth, that where there is no necessity or manifest utility you shun the society of women and beardless boys. Wherever you are, choose for yourself a father, a man who is holy and discreet and gentle and kindly, one taught rather by experience than gifted with a ready tongue, who by words and efficacious burning example, may instruct you in divine things and enkindle within you the love of God, one in whom you may readily find counsel in all your needs, and spiritual consolation.

(15) The Fifteenth, that with the greatest diligence you banish all chilling bitterness and melancholy, wherein lies hid the way of confusion "that leads to death" (*S. Jerome: ii Comment. in Mich. vii. 14 ss.*), maintaining yourself always interiorly and exteriorly in calm and tranquillity. Contradict no one in any way nor resist at all, but rather acquiesce throughout with all men in everything, provided no harm come to God's honour or hindrance to the salvation of souls.

(16) The Sixteenth lies in the conformity of affection and desire to the Will of God. Let everything be of service to you; let

nothing in the world disedify you, enriched as you are, by divine bounty, with the grace of purity and innocence. Do not sully yourself with the evil of others by being unduly disturbed at their defects, for you only add thereby sin to sin, and in your efforts to free others from the deep, become more deeply immersed therein yourself. Preferable is it rather, where change cannot be wrought without loss, to lay over all the gentle mantle of charity, leaving all to that Supreme Wisdom, which knows how to draw good out of evil. Thus in all things, in good equally with bad, you will be able to find, God granting, spiritual advantage.

(17) The Seventeenth, that you keep your heart with all diligence set solely upon spiritual things, allowing no image of any visible thing to get embedded therein, that thus, aloof from all creatures, it may freely devote itself to Him Who is the Creator of all.

(18) The Eighteenth, that seeing in all men the image and likeness of the Divine Majesty, you therefore love all with real inward affection, and be helpful towards all, but particularly towards the sick and such as are in any need, just as a good mother loves and cares for an only and well-loved child

(cf. ii Kings i. 26) ; taking care, however, to avoid throughout all spiritually injurious distractions.

(19) The Nineteenth, that you have your mind so continually directed towards God, that every work and exercise of yours, whether intellectual or manual, becomes a prayer ; and that you carry out all domestic duties, particularly the more lowly ones, with a great fervour of charity as if you were doing them for Christ Himself. And, indeed, you can and should think this to be really true, seeing that He said in the Gospel : *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me* (Math. xxv. 40).

(20) The Twentieth, that you show honour and reverence, both fitting and devout to all persons, and aim at preserving intact, as the very pupil of your eye, the norm of most holy Obedience, and this not merely in big matters or where doubts arise, but even in the very smallest, obeying not only seniors and superiors, but also all inferiors as well, giving in to no matter whom and denying yourself for Christ's sake. In good things or such as are indifferent aim ever at doing the will of another, in nothing making yourself a burden to anyone, but rather loving all in

the charity of Christ, and making yourself pleasant to all without distinction. Fly all noticeable marks of affability and particular friendships and familiarities, and be very much on your guard lest, by yourself or through another, you ever become cause or occasion, by word or gesture or act, of any rancour or hatred or clamour or insult, or disturbance or murmuring or detraction or scandal or flattery or of anything else similar in any manner or way to these.

(21) The Twenty-first, that you endeavour to conceal from all the virtues and spiritual favours which the Divine Mercy may deign to operate within you, as also your sufferings and conflicts, holy resolutions and such like, except in so far as these matters should in Confession be laid open before one's confessor. To a true and proved friend, however, whose counsel and advice you think may help you, you may perhaps reveal them for the sake of your spiritual progress. Be always on the look out to filch away time, whenever you can, that you may have leisure to spend at your customary prayers and holy meditations, that, *sitting solitary* (Thren. iii. 28), you may be raised aloft with heavenly desires.

(22) The Twenty-second, that, disentangled

from all things, desiring nothing of the world, already despising every created thing, you become intent on your Creator with so great a stretching forth of the mind and such fervour of desire, that, as one forgetful of all lesser things, you have God always in mind, whatever you may be doing, wherever you may be, in whatsoever business you may be engaged, by night, by day, every hour, every moment, believing and realizing that you are most truly in His presence, and knowing that He sees you from every side. With great reverence and fear and inward misgiving also, with very great discernment and most ardent love, ponder on such things as these : at one time, prostrate at the feet of His immeasurable Majesty, demand in the bitterness of your soul forgiveness of sins ; at another, pierced by the sword of compassion at the sight of the most sacred sufferings of the Son of God, stand beneath His Cross, wounded with Him, sorrowing, and in tears ; now gather up before your mind the whole course of His mortal life, that its perfection may act as corrective to the crookedness of your own ; now review His benefits to you without number and immense, and earnestly thank Him for them ; now, transfixed with

the ardent arrows of His love, see Him imaged in every creature ; now meditating on His power, now on His wisdom, now on His goodness and clemency, praise Him grandly in all His works ; now, drawn with desires of our heavenly home, yearn after Him with sighs of longing ; now, with strangely joyous and overflowing admiration of heart, contemplate the warmth of His inestimable charity towards us, and let your mind sink down into Him. Think how at times you have hastened towards God, and at others fled from Him, and how He has held you and raised you up and drawn you to Him. Ponder on your thorough thanklessness, in face of the ineffable tenderness of His divine mercy laid open before you, and draw yourself up to Him with deepest burning charity, and with the tears of complete abandonment to Him. Dwell diligently on the most hidden and deep and wonderful judgments of His justice, supremely mysterious as they are, and indeed quite staggering. Adore Him in all things with highest love and great fear and awe, being faithful to Him and constant, prudent, submissive and humble ; and above all else, bear ever in soul and body a lively remembrance of His most sacred Passion.

(23) The Twenty-third, that, *watching upon thy ward* (cf. Isaias xxi. 8), you guard yourself always with most cautious solicitude from the deceits of the ancient enemy who transforming himself often into *an angel of light* (ii Cor. xi. 14) lays his snares and stretches his nets over the paths of men, that he may capture our souls. Fly as a sparrow from the snares of the trackers and, with holy inward humility, build up in yourself such purity as to be proof against even his finest nets. From these you will be delivered when you shall have become as Jacob was, who had God ever before his eyes, for over such a one the Watcher *will neither slumber nor sleep* (Psalm 120 : 4).

(24) The Twenty-fourth, that holding untiringly to the rigour of your holy Institute, aflame with the holy ardour of celestial desires, preserving unsullied the cleanly beauty of mind and body, and the unspotted purity of a delicate conscience, you take most watchful care never to grow tepid and unheeding. That you may the better and more diligently keep to this, you should seven times in the day look carefully into your life, viz. before or immediately after each Canonical Hour, considering and atten-

tively examining whether from hour to hour you are walking *worthy of God* (Col. i. 10), without stain in the path of Justice. And since there is no one who keeps himself within such strict discipline as never to neglect or omit anything, therefore is it necessary to have recourse to the laver of Penance, and very often definitely to accuse oneself with heartfelt sorrow. In this accusation, i.e. in Confession, you should make known to your confessor, as to God, all your defects, unravelling all in order, integrally, truly and simply without any veiling excuses, concealment or palliation: and, firstly, your *omissions* in all things pertaining to God, especially concerning the double exercise of prayer, mental and vocal; then, *defects* of righteousness in your dealings with your neighbour, and, lastly, sins of *commission* due to the slothful custody of the senses and want of watchfulness over your affections and thoughts.

Confession must always be accompanied with contrition and satisfaction. You should grieve over the sins you have committed, not merely the great ones, but over the small ones also, and be on your guard against repeating them, and be careful to eliminate the

causes and occasions of sin, however deeply attached to them we may seem to be. Such was the Saviour's advice ; the eye that scandalizes you must be plucked out, i.e. occasions of sin which, though the ultimate effects of them may displease us very much, have an outward appearance which is exceedingly alluring. Precisely in this lies the hardest struggle of all, and hence it is so necessary for the servant of God to be deaf, dumb and blind, quite indifferent in fact to everything in which spiritual profit is not found.

In order, then, that you may attend the more carefully to, and be all the more generously fervent in the observance of the divine precepts and in the practice of all these points of spiritual discipline we have mentioned, and in others besides, try once every day, between dawn and eve, lovingly to ponder on these five points : the shortness of life : the perils of the way : the uncertainty surrounding death : the rewards awaiting the just : the punishments in store for the guilty. Thus your service will not be without fear, nor your joy unmingled with sorrow.

(25) The Twenty-fifth and last is this, that when, by the aid of divine grace, you shall have done all things well, you look on

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yourself as a useless servant and a sinner, regarding yourself as undeserving of any of God's benefits, although, holding your faith still strenuously, and filled with the love of God, you hope, with a very firm confidence, that the warmth of the mercy of the Most Merciful Father will be opened out even to you.

When then, still unwearied, you shall have laid in profound humility the most firm foundation of Faith, and raised up the splendid walls of unbroken and fervent Charity, adorning them with every virtue, and when, lastly, you shall have laid on the glorious roof of Hope, desired and most blessed indeed, then at length, when all has been disposed in order, may He Who dwells in the highest heaven and yet is the gentle Guest of the faithful soul, *Whose delight is to be with the children of men* (cf. Prov. viii. 31), may He at last deign to dwell with you by grace during this present exile until, life's course being run, in the land of heavenly beatitude, clothed with the glorious robe of immortality, you may deserve to see in joy with all the saints, the brightness of His countenance, where will be found most perfect happiness and unending joy, the term and completion of all our desires.

CONCLUSION

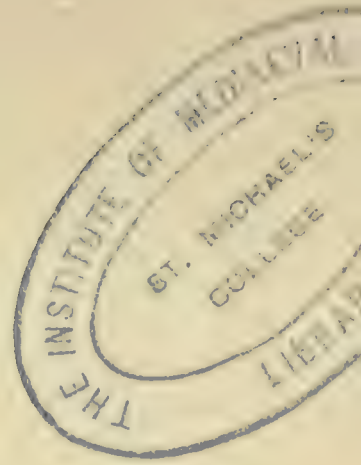
CONCLUSION

Dear Brother, recognize this also as an unquestioned truth, that unless you perfectly deny yourself you cannot follow in your Saviour's footsteps ; and without continuous solicitude and labour you will never obtain His grace, and unless you knock assiduously at His gates you will never enter into peace of mind, and unless you keep yourself ever in the fear of God, the whole edifice of your spiritual life will speedily collapse in ruin. But if, in the above-mentioned practices you maintain yourself faithfully and perseveringly, I hope, in the Saviour's mercy, that he will make you worthy of His grace here and a sharer of His glory hereafter. Amen.

I have not written these things to you, *Carissime*, because I thought you needed them, but because, having collected them together for myself, and seeing my own inconstancy, I thought I might communicate them to you as to a faithful co-operator so that what I, in my listlessness and careless tepidity, neglect, you in your generosity and devoted fervour might supply, all the more so as I know you to have aspirations almost identical with

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mine and to take great pleasure in such simple thoughts as these. Wherefore, dearest in Christ, receive, I pray you, these things in such a spirit of charity as I know myself to have had in sending them to you, a real devoted love. May you so aim, by stern spiritual endeavour, at mastering them all—though the practice of them here may seem a *thing of sorrow rather than of joy* (cf. Heb. xii. 11)—that they may yield in time *the most peaceable fruit of justice* (cf. *ibid.*). In the sweet remembrance of that hope may your soul even now be filled with joyous devotion and the fulness and richness that is in Christ Jesus Our Lord, to Whom in your holy prayers you must commend me, an arid and verbose man rather than a devout one, *to Whom be honour and glory, splendour and empire for ever and ever. Amen* (cf. Rom. xvi. 27 : i Pet. iv. 11).



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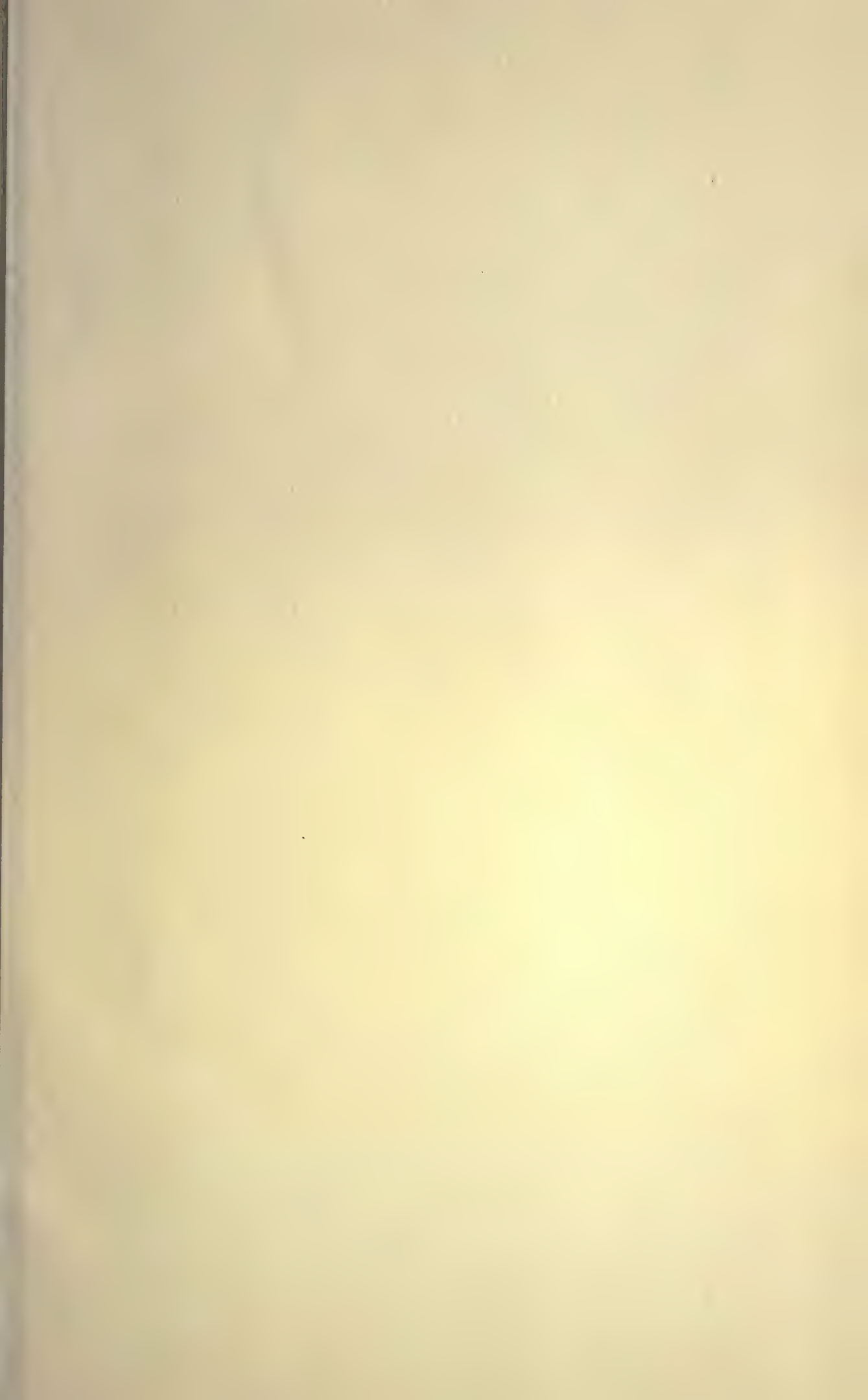
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